NATION

Protests mar Kerala Church's uniform mass

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

FPIs pumped ₹11K crore last week on positive mkt cues

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Ton-up Smriti, spinners hand India massive 143-run win over SA in 1st ODI

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Eid-al-Adha Mubarak

On the occasion of Eid al-Adha, our offices will remain closed on 17 June, 2024. Hence, there will be no edition of the Salar Digital English Daily dated 18 June, 2024

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ROAD TO

HELL

While BBMP claims that it has been routinely filling up pot-holes, this is far from the truth. Salar News reports on 2 roads - Hennur-Bagalur and in Doddanekkundi - where people risk their lives and limbs.
>>>More on Page 2

PHOTO: PTI

BJP is sending goons to Delhi Jal Board: Atishi

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Amid protests over the national capital's severe water shortage, Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj on Sunday accused BJP leaders and workers of vandalising a Delhi Jal Board office Amid protests over the national capital's severe water shortage, Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj on Sunday accused BJP leaders and workers of vandalising a Delhi Jal Board office Delhi Water Minister Atishi on Sunday accused BJP workers of vandalising a Delhi Jal Board office in south Delhi and alleged that the saffron party is hatching a conspiracy against the national capital's residents. She said at a press conference that the BJP is leaving no stone unturned to trouble Delhi's people.Amid protests over the national capital's severe water shortage, Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj on Sunday accused BJP leaders and workers of vandalising a Delhi Jal Board office. Earlier in the day, BJP leaders led a protest against the AAP government in different areas across Delhi over the water shortage." *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Shah urges 'zero-terror plan' in Jammu & Kashmir

This comes as Kashmir grapples with 4 terror attacks in a week

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

During a high-level meeting at the North Block here to review the security situation in the Union Territory in the wake of recent terrorist attacks there, Union Home Minister Amit Shah directed security agencies to implement area domination and zero-terror plans in the Jammu division like they did in Kashmir to achieve success.

The fight against terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir is in its decisive phase and recent incidents show that terrorism has been forced to shrink from highly organised acts of violence to a mere proxy war, Shah said on Sunday.

The meeting with top security officials was convened to review the situation in the wake of the attacks in the Union Territory's Jammu region, officials said. Home Minister Shah directed the security agencies to work on a mission mode and ensure quick response in a coordinated manner.

Reiterating the government's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said the government will leave no stone unturned to root out terrorism from Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah appreciated the security agencies and the Jammu and Kashmir administration for the successful conduct of the Lok Sabha elections, which witnessed record voter turnout in the Union Territory. He directed the agencies to replicate in the Jammu division the successes achieved in the Kashmir Valley through the area domination plan and the zero-terror plan, the officials said. The fight against terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir is in its decisive phase and the recent incidents show that terrorism has been forced to shrink from highly organised acts of violence to a mere proxy war, the minister said.

In a subsequent meeting, Shah also reviewed the preparations for the annual Amarnath pilgrimage, which is scheduled to begin on 29 June. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha, Army Chief General Manoj Pande, Army Chief-designate Lt. General Upendra Dwivedi, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, Director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka, CRPF Director General Anish Dayal Singh, BSF Director General Nitin Agarwal, Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police RR Swain and other top security officials attended the meeting.

Terrorists struck at four places in Reasi, Kathua and Doda districts of Jammu and Kashmir within four days last week, killing nine pilgrims and a CRPF jawan and leaving seven security personnel and several others injured. *—PTI*

Union Home Minister Amit Shah chairs a high level meeting to review security situation in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Reasi attack mastermind killed in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 16 JUNE

According to claims by Pakistani media the mastermind behind the Reasi terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir was allegedly neutralised in Pakistan by 'unknown men'.

The development comes following the attack on a bus carrying pilgrims to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine which plunged into a deep gorge in Reasi district on 9 June, resulting in nine deaths and injuring 40 people.

Meanwhile, around 50 people have been detained in connection with the attack. A video circulating online features a man in a white shirt, discussing recent terror attacks in Jammu & Kashmir's Reasi. He mentions reports that the mastermind has been neutralised by unknown individuals in Pakistan. The Jammu and Kashmir region has witnessed an increase in violence with three major attacks recently: the Reasi terror attack, the Kathua terror attack, and the Doda terror attack.

SSP Reasi urged the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities to authorities immediately.

—Salar News

Director of NCERT Dinesh Prasad Saklani during an interview with PTI in New Delhi on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

NCERT removes Babri Masjid, calls it 3-dome structure

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has revised its plus two political science textbook by ruling out Babri Masjid and referring it to as a 'three-dome structure'.

Chapter 8, 'Recent Developments in Indian Politics' has been revised. The chapter lists the Ayodhya movement among five other key developments.

No need to teach about riots, demolition in schools, says NCERT chief

NCERT director, Dinesh Prasad Saklani said the tweaks in textbooks are part of annual revision and should not be a subject of hue and cry.

Rejecting accusations of saffronisation of school curriculum, he said that references to Gujarat riots and Babri masjid demolition were modified in school textbooks because teaching about riots "can create violent and depressed citizens." Saklani asked, "Why should we teach about riots in school textbooks? We want to create positive citizens not violent and depressed individuals".

"Should we teach our students in a manner that they become offensive, create hatred in society or become victim of hatred? Is that education's purpose? Should we teach about riots to such young children ... when they grow up, they can learn about it but why school textbooks. Let them understand what happened and why it happened," he said.

It focuses on Supreme Court judgement that paved the way for the construction of a Ram temple at the site where the disputed structure once stood before it was torn down by Hindu activists in December 1992. Supreme Court verdict was widely accepted in the country.

The latest deletions in the textbooks include: BJP's 'rath yatra' from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya; the role of kar sevaks; communal violence in the wake of the demolition of the Babri masjid; President's rule in BJP-ruled states; and BJP's expression of "regret over the happenings at Ayodhya". *—Salar News/PTI*

Sec 144 in T'gana's Medak after mob attacks madrasa

HYDERABAD, 16 JUNE

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC was clamped by authorities in Telangana's Medak after clashes broke out between Minhaj Ul Uloom madrasa and Hindu right-wing mob in the town on Saturday night. Several people were injured after a mob attacked a madrasa allegedly over alleged transportation of cows for slaughter ahead of Bakrid festival.

Thirteen people were arrested following the clash. The situation has been brought under control and remains peaceful, police said on Sunday. Stones were pelted and public property was damaged following which police resorted to lathicharge to disperse the rioters.

Some shops and business establishments were vandalised and a hospital was also attacked where some injured people were undergoing treatment, they said. At least seven people belonging to both the communities were injured during the clashes, police said adding additional personnel were deployed and the situation was brought under control in the town.

According to police, trouble began when a group of cow vigilantes claimed that cattle were transported to a madrasa in Medak. When the police arrived at the spot they found the cattle, including oxen, "unfit" for slaughter and moved them to an animal shelter.

Later, the police dispersed the group from the spot.

Subsequently, the group reached the outskirts of Medak after being tipped about alleged transportation of cows.

Reacting to the incident, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said on X: "Telangana was peaceful sans any communal violence for the last 9.5 years with KCR Garu at the helm of affairs. And now in the Congress Government, neither is there any Law nor any Order. Truly shameful that even a peaceful town Medak which never had any communal activity in the past has now become a mess".

—Salar News with PTI

6 post-dated cheques for 'NEET paper leak' recovered

PATNA, 16 JUNE

The Economic Offences Unit (EOU) of Bihar Police has recovered six post-dated cheques which were suspected to have been issued in favour of mafia demanding over Rs 30 lakh from each candidate seeking alleged leaked question paper ahead of The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) held last month.

"During the course of investigation, EOU sleuths recovered six post-dated cheques that were issued in the favour of criminals who reportedly facilitated question papers to the aspirants ahead of the examination," Manavjit Singh Dhillon, Deputy Inspector General (DIG), EOU, told PTI on Sunday.

Investigators are ascertaining details about account holders from the banks concerned, he added. The EOU has so far arrested 13 people, including four examinees and their family members, in connection with the alleged NEET-UG 2024 paper leak case. All accused belong to Bihar, said the DIG. The EOU has also issued notices to nine candidates (seven from Bihar and one each from Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra) to join the probe, he added. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

EID-AL-ADHA MUBARAK

People purchase vermicelli outside Jama Masjid ahead of Eid al-Adha, in Gurugram, Sunday **PHOTO: PTI** >>>More on Page 5

CM defends 'reasonable' hike in petrol, diesel prices

BENGALURU, 16 JUNE

Siddaramaiah **PHOTO: PTI**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday defended the hike in petrol and diesel prices saying that it will ensure funding essential public services and development projects.

With the Opposition BJP and its ally JD(S) coming down heavily on the Congress government for increasing the petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 and Rs 3.5 per litre respectively, Siddaramaiah said even after the hike, taxes on fuel remains low compared to most southern states. "The Government of Karnataka has increased VAT on petrol to 29.84 per cent and on diesel to 18.44 per cent. Even after this hike, our state's taxes on fuel remain lower than most South Indian states and similar economy-sized states like Maharashtra," the Chief Minister said.

According to him, the VAT on petrol is 25 per cent plus Rs 5.12 additional tax, and on diesel in Maharashtra it is 21 per cent. Karnataka's revised rates are still more affordable, he pointed out. Stating that despite the VAT hike, diesel prices in Karnataka are still lower than in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, the Chief Minister said, "We remain committed to keeping fuel prices reasonable for our citizens." *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

WRONG, SAYS BJP

Musk calls EVMs hackable; gives Oppn ammo

NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW, 16 JUNE

Elon Musk, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Rahul Gandhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said EVMs in India are a "black box" which nobody is allowed to scrutinise, and asserted that "serious concerns" are being raised about transparency in the country's electoral process.

Congress' ally and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also questioned credibility of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and demanded that all future elections should be conducted through ballot papers.

"Democracy ends up becoming a sham and prone to fraud when institutions lack accountability," Gandhi said in a post on X and tagged a media report which claimed that a relative of Shiv Sena's candidate, who won the polls from Mumbai's North-West seat by 48 votes, had a phone that unlocks an EVM. The former Congress president also tagged a post by Tesla CEO Elon Musk in which he talked about eliminating EVMs.

"We should eliminate electronic voting machines. The risk of being hacked by humans or AI, while small, is still too high," Musk had said in his recent post.

BJP on Sunday accused Musk of making a "huge sweeping generalisation" by calling for eliminating EVMs, saying his views may apply to the US but not to India. Countering the Tesla CEO's criticism of EVMs, BJP leader Rajeev Chandrasekhar said, "This is a huge sweeping generalization statement that implies no one can build secure digital hardware. Wrong. Elon Musk's view may apply to the US and other places - where they use regular compute platforms to build Internet connected Voting machines."

BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya said Musk or whoever else thinks they can hack the EVM should approach the Election Commission of India and take a shot at it. Former union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar countered Musk's criticism of EVMs and termed it "a huge sweeping generalisation" even as the Tesla boss responded saying "anything can be hacked". *—PTI*

- Musk of making a "huge sweeping generalisation" by calling for eliminating EVMs, saying his views may apply to the US but not to India

Hennur-Bagalur road a nightmare, locals seek help

Cops say at least 7 accidents are reported in a week

BENGALURU, 16 JUNE

The residents and commuters have demanded better infrastructure on Hennur-Bagalur Main Road because at least seven accidents are reported every week on the stretch due to poor upkeep. Hennur traffic police officials told **Salar News** that about 25,000 vehicles go through the stretch daily and accidents are mainly due to the poor infrastructure of the road and the negligence of drivers, the officials said.

The 13.4km stretch from Hennur Depot to Bagalur Cross serves as an alternative road to Kempegowda International Airport and many take this route to avoid the toll on the main airport road. The road leads to prominent areas such as Hebbal, Kempegowda Bus Station, Shivajinagar and KR Market. Having a width of around 40 feet, the road is dotted with potholes and untarred stretches.

A major bottleneck on the stretch is Byg Brewski Brewing Company junction where accidents occur regularly, said David Paul, a businessman who resides on the stretch. The other bottlenecks on the stretch are Gubbi Cross, Narayanapura Cross and Byrathi Cross. "More traffic signals and police personnel are needed on this route as these are developing areas and traffic is bound to increase," Paul said.

Lokesh, a shopkeeper in Bagalur, said, "As there is not enough width, the cars go slowly on the roads, creating traffic jams in the area." The peak time of traffic is from 8am to 11am and from 5pm to 8:30pm. Adding to the trouble, there is no streamlined flow of vehicular movement as the commuters drive on the wrong side of the road in many parts.

The road is about 40 feet wide and 13.4 km long and is riddled with potholes **PHOTO: SALAR**

The residents of the Bagalur have said there are only three traffic signals on the stretch which houses nine colleges and 15 schools. With signals only in Hennur Cross, Voddarapalya and Narayanapura Cross, the college- and school-going students find it hard to cross the roads.

Unscheduled stoppages and unscientific signages also make matters worse. Puneetha R, a member of Residents' Association of Pride Pegasus apartments located near Kothanur on the road, said, "The buses stop at the exit gate of our apartment and also there is a U-turn near the apartment creating traffic and accidents."

Rains make driving through pothole-ridden roads a tough task for motorists. "When it rains, roads are waterlogged and chances of accidents are high during this time," a BMTC driver plying on the stretch.

Hennur traffic police said there is no support from Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to fix the infra woes on the stretch. When it rains there is waterlogging and the drainages are left unattended.

BS Prahalad, Engineer in Chief, BBMP, said, "We accept that there are potholes and they have to be filled immediately. It is the duty of BBMP and the government to take care of these matters but all accidents cannot be linked to accidents; it can also be because of negligent driving." *—Salar News*

Doddanekkundi road a muddy mess 3 months after being laid

MEGHANA PRASAD
BENGALURU, 16 JUNE

Residents of Lake View Road, Doddanekkundi in Ward Number 85, Whitefield, are facing a distressing commute due to the stretch's rapid deterioration in the monsoon season and the lack of proper footpaths. Retarred in March, the road has become a muddy mess, posing a significant risk to motorists and pedestrians alike.

Speaking to **Salar News,** Sangeetha Menon S, a resident from an apartment in the area, said, "Whenever it rains here, the roads become so muddy and slippery that even the pedestrians find it hard to walk. The roads become waterlogged, creating traffic jams. I have seen many vehicles slip due to the mud on the roads."

The uncovered drains along the road also pose a safety hazard, contributing to the damage caused by monsoon rains. Apart from the chances of accidents, residents are worried about the stagnant water in the drains, which may cause water and airborne diseases.

The major issue lies in the poor quality of the construction and lack of foresight in the project's planning. Lalithamba BV, Governing Council Member & Zonal Leader of the Bengaluru Nava Nirmana Party for Bommanahalli, told **Salar News,** "This road is dangerous for pedestrians because there are no sidewalks. The retarring was carried out in a hurry just before the election. Our representatives are prioritising short-term gains over pedestrian safety."

Lake View Road in Whitefield poses a significant risk to drivers and pedestrians alike **PHOTO: SALAR**

Residents said Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has been ignoring the complaints filed by them. The civic body cited jurisdiction issues and that the road falls under the category of major roads, limiting their capacity to address the problem.

Another resident, who did not wish to be named, said "It is not only the rains and the road, but even the open Rajakaluves are a problem. People throw all sorts of garbage in it and this in turn clogs the drainage system connected to it."

Speaking to **Salar News,** a senior official from BBMP's Road Infrastructure Department said: "We have received complaints about the condition of the road. But we are not taking any action because of the weather. Even if we relay the roads, the asphalt (tar) needs at least 48 hours of sunlight to set in. If we do the tarring now, the water from the rains will break down the asphalt, causing cracks and potholes on the road."

Lakshmikanth Reddy, a resident who has lived in the locality for almost six years, said the roads were already damaged before the retarring work was carried out three months ago. "Now the half-baked work of the authorities has damaged the road even more than before," he said.

A BBMP official attributed the initial damage to overexposure to extreme heat that can cause the roads to expand and contract and eventually break down. "Since it is a major road in that location, the stress from heavy-duty vehicles such as lorries and tankers can damage the road," he said. *—Salar News*

PM to inaugurate Tumakuru railway project in 2026

TUMAKURU, 16 JUNE

Union Minister V Somanna announced that the Rayadurga-Tumakuru railway project is anticipated to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi by 2026. Speaking after receiving felicitations in Tumakuru on Sunday he has directed officials and the railway department to accelerate the project's completion. Somanna stressed the importance of State's support for the project, noting the lack of funding and pending encroachment clearances. *—Salar News*

City cops issue traffic advisory amid Bakrid

BENGALURU, 16 JUNE

City traffic department has issued an advisory for commuters during Bakrid celebration. In view of Bakrid, a large gathering is expected to offer prayers on BG road near Gurappanapalya. In order to ensure smooth traffic movement, the following traffic restrictions are imposed till the religious prayer is concluded. Vehicle movement around Gurappanapalya on Bannerghatta Road will be restricted today, with public transport suspended from 8am onwards. *—Salar News*

RCI issues notice for BSc clinical psychology

BENGALURU, 16 JUNE

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) has announced the launch of a BSc in Clinical Psychology (Hons) from the academic session 2024-25. Earlier the BSc course was non-RCI licensed three-year course and now it aims to prepare graduates to provide effective counselling services. NIMHANS in Bengaluru is RCI licensed, Manipal academy for higher academy, Udupi, DIMHANS, Dharward, JSS Medical College, Mysuru, and KAPMIAHS, Shivamogga are other colleges across Karnataka with RCI licence. *—Salar News*

BJP to protest across State against fuel price hike

HASSAN, 16 JUNE

BJP will stage protests across the State against the hike in petrol and diesel prices on Monday, the party's State Unit President BY Vijayendra said on Sunday. BJP leader R Ashoka said that BJP will mobilise bullock carts and bikes and organise a stir in front of the Vidhana Soudha.

The State government on Saturday hiked sales tax on fuel which will make petrol and diesel costlier.

Petrol prices have gone up by Rs 3 per litre and diesel by Rs 3.5 per litre.

Addressing the media, former deputy chief minister CN Ashwathnarayan called for a protest at Freedom Park on Monday. He said,'' The Congress government from the time of its induction has done nothing but increase the prices.

On Saturday there was an increase in the prices of petrol and diesel by 3rs and 3.5rs per litre respectively. Karnataka sales tax prices increased from 26 per cent to 30 per cent. The prices of necessities such as drinking water and electricity have also increased. According to him, the tax prices during the BJP rule were below Rs 100 and the tax prices in Congress-ruled states were near Rs 102 which is high.

Ashoka and BJP MLC Chalavadi Narayanaswamy released the poster, which displayed that Congress leaders had protested when petrol and diesel prices were increased under the previous state government.

BJP workers led by MLC CT Ravi on Sunday staged protests with hibiscus in their ears and coconut shells in their hands to mock the congress government decision in Chikkamangaluru. *—Salar News/PTI*

8 Kadur school officials suspended over student's death

CHIKKMAGALURU

The Karnataka Residential Institutions Education Society (KREIS) has suspended eight officials of Morarji residential School in Kadur taluk of Chikkamagaluru district in connection with the death of a school student. The deceased, Akash, a class 7 student, died after receiving an electric shock., Eight people, including officers and staff connected to the case, have been suspended. Kadur station has registered a case. The police have examined the site of accident. *—Salar News*

Renukaswamy murder case: Father of accused dies of heart attack

CHITRADURGA, 16 JUNE

The father of one of the accused in the Renukaswamy murder case died of heart attack, family sources said.

Anukumar, who is the accused number seven in the police FIR, lost his father Chandrappa, on Friday Family sources said Chandrappa was under depression ever since his son was arrested.

As Anukumar's mother was adamant that her son should be present during the funeral, police brought him from Bengaluru to Chitradurga under tight security after seeking permission from a court on late Saturday night, sources said. "Chandrappa had died of a heart attack on Friday evening. Anukumar's mother and family insisted on not picking up the body until Anukumar came," the sources added.

Bengaluru police brought Anukumar to Chitradurga after obtaining permission from the court on late Saturday night. An Additional Metropolitan Magistrate court on Saturday extended the police custody to Darshan and his 12 aides for five more days, which was to end on Sunday. *—PTI*

The cars seized by the police **PHOTO: ANI**

Renukaswamy murder: Car used for abduction seized

CHITRADURGA, 16 JUNE

The police team probing the Renukaswamy murder case, in which leading Kannada film actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and his actress friend Pavithra Gowda are the key accused, seized a car on Sunday that was allegedly used in kidnapping the victim. One of the accused persons, Ravi, had allegedly parked the car at a house at Ayyanahalli village in Chitradurga district. The police also interrogated Ravi's family and seized many items from the car. Darshan and Pavithra, along with over 15 people, have been arrested in connection with the Renukaswamy murder case. Meanwhile, Mysuru Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre clarified that actor Darshan is not the ambassador of the forest department. Khandre stated, "There are no ambassadors in our department," he said. This clarification came in response to rumors about actor Darshan being an official representative of the forest department. *—Salar News/PTI*

FIR against scribe for 'fake news' on RaGa

BENGALURU, 16 JUNE

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress committee's legal cell has lodged an FIR against journalist Ajeet Bharti at High ground police station on Sunday. The complaint was filed by BK Bopanna, lawyer and KPCC Secretary. He accused Bharti of falsely alleging to Rahul Gandhi that he intends to restore Babri Masjid in Ayodhya's Ram Mandir.

According to FIR, it is stated that Bharti's claims in a video were misleading and aimed at spreading hatred among different religious groups, thereby disturbing public peace, causing disorder.

On Friday, Bharti hosted a live session of an interview with actor Naseeruddin Shah. Bharti spoke about how Shah described his childhood experiences and claimed that communal tensions existed before Modi's tenure, but Modi capitalised on them. Bharti pointed out that while some BJP leaders might have made incendiary statements, top leaders of other parties, including Gandhi, had also made provocative claims. Specifically, Bharti alleged that Gandhi intended to remove the Ram temple and bring back the Babri Masjid

They repeatedly spread disinformation because they know they are protected by BJP and Opposition will not take any action against them." *—Salar News*

'IT'S OUR IDENTITY'

'Will not send Dasara elephants to Andhra'

MYSURU, 16 JUNE

Mysuru Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, confirmed that the State would not be sending its elephants to Andhra Pradesh. "Dasara elephants are our identity. For any reason, they cannot be sent," he asserted." However, he mentioned that they are evaluating the possibility of sending other elephants that are not associated with the festival.

Andhra Pradesh government has requested Kumki elephants from Karnataka to assist in managing human-elephant conflicts. Minister Khandre noted that while some states lack elephant camps and face severe human-elephant conflict issues, Karnataka has yet to make a final decision on this request.

Andhra Pradesh government has requested Kumki elephants from State to manage human-elephant conflict **PHOTO: Twitter/Dr. Murugesh R Nirani**

Addressing the construction of a ropeway to Chamundi Hill, the minister reassured that the project would be environmentally considerate.

"Environment protection should be accompanied by development," he said. The government's plans to construct a memorial at the site where elephant Arjuna died. He said that the design for Arjuna's memorial is ready and will be installed within the next 15 days.

Khandre expressed sorrow over the recent elephant deaths due to electrocution and assured that measures are being taken to prevent such incidents. "It is a sad fact that elephants are dying due to electrocution.

We have instructed the authorities to report the death of elephants and take action to ensure such incidents do not recur," he said. *—Salar News*

Bidar implements Dallas Police's CC camera project

BIDAR, 16 JUNE

In a move to enhance security, Bidar's District Superintendent of Police SL Channabasavanna, announced the implementation of a CC camera project inspired by the American Dallas Police. The initiative aims to detect and respond to thefts, robberies, and other criminal activities. Channabasavanna has urged the public to install CC cameras at their residences and workplaces. The locally installed cameras will be registered with the police department. Access to camera footage is strictly limited to criminal investigations. Homeowners and shopkeepers will be approached for footage only if a crime occurs in their vicinity. Additionally, guidance will be provided for proper camera installation if needed.

Following the Dallas Police model, Bidar police will acknowledge individuals who register their CC cameras with a letter of appreciation, encouraging community involvement in this safety initiative.

The Dallas Police Department operates a program called CONNECT DALLAS allowing private residents and business owners to register their security cameras to an online portal. The portal is secure and only accessible with permission, ensuring privacy.

. *—Salar News*

Mehbooba slams HC's 'selective justice' in BSY case

SRINAGAR, 16 JUNE

PDP President Mehbooba Mufti on Sunday termed the Karnataka High court staying the arrest of BJP leader BS Yediyurappa in a POSCO case on the grounds that he is former chief minister, a selective delivery of justice. In contrast, she cited the examples of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Jharkhand former chief minister Hemant Soren, who, she said, were jailed on "far lesser charges." "Karnataka High Court's stay on BJPs BS Yediyurappa's arrest in POSCO case stating that the accused being a former chief minister is not going to go anywhere stands in contrast to the treatment meted out to another ex chief minister Hemant soren & sitting Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal both behind bars since months on far lesser charges.—*PTI*

J&K Wakf under fire for neglecting Eid prayers

SRINAGAR, 16 JUNE

Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid, the management body of historic Srinagar mosque, on Sunday hit out at the Jammu and Kashmir Wakf Board for not making arrangements for Eid Prayers in the old city. The mosque management expressed strong resentment that the Wakf Board did not respond to its letter and failed to make necessary arrangements at the Eidgah for the upcoming Eid prayers, the religious body said. "For over a year now under the pretext of upgrading Eidgah, Wakf board is not completing the repair works despite repeated requests and reminders," it said.—*PTI*

Chidambaram: BJP, AIADMK contesting bypoll with 'proxy'

CHENNAI, 16 JUNE

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday alleged the BJP and AIADMK are fighting the 10 July Vikravandi bypoll through 'proxy' PMK and that the INDIA bloc must ensure a resounding victory of the DMK candidate. Hitting out at Tamil Nadu's main Opposition AIADMK for boycotting the bypoll, Chidambaram, on X, said: "AIADMK's decision to boycott the Vikravandi by-election is clear evidence that it has received instructions from the 'top' to facilitate the electoral chances of the NDA candidate (PMK). Both BJP and AIADMK are fighting the battle through a proxy (PMK). The INDIA bloc must ensure the resounding victory of the DMK candidate."Tamil Nadu's principal Opposition party, AIADMK, on 15 June announced a boycott of the bypoll to the Vikravandi Assembly constituency, alleging the ruling DMK will unleash 'violence' and not allow people to vote 'independently.'—*PTI*

Assam Secretariat India's first eco-friendly HQ

GUWAHATI, 16 JUNE

The Assam Secretariat on Sunday became the country's first green state government headquarters with the inauguration of a 2.5 MW solar power project on its campus, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. Installed at a cost of Rs 12.5 crore, the grid-connected rooftop solar power plant will save Rs 30 lakh in electricity bills every month, he said while addressing the official programme here. "Today, we took a giant leap forward in our goal to become a Net-Zero Govt, as I inaugurated a 2.5 MW Solar Project in Janata Bhawan, making #AssamGreenSecretariat, India's first Green Secretariat," Sarma said in a post on X after the function. From now onwards, the secretariat complex will run entirely on solar power, resulting in savings of Rs 30 lakh every month on electricity bills, he added. The Chief Minister also said the government has decided that all official complexes will be fitted with solar panels.—*PTI*

New Criminal Laws effective from 1 July

The laws aim to enhance the justice system

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge) Law and Justice, Arjun Ram Meghwal on Sunday said that the new Criminal Laws, namely Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, Bharatiya Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, will come into force on 1 July, 2024.

He highlighted that Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) is providing training for it.

Notably, under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, police custody under general criminal laws has been increased from 15 days to 90 days, depending on the nature of the offense.

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita will have 358 sections (instead of 511 sections in the IPC). A total of 20 new crimes have been added to the bill, and the imprisonment sentence has been increased for 33 of them. The amount of the fine has been increased in 83 crimes and mandatory minimum punishment has been introduced in 23 crimes. The penalty of community service has been introduced for six crimes and 19 sections have been repealed or removed from the bill. Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita will have 531 sections. A total of 177 provisions have been changed in the bill, and nine new sections as well as 39 new sub-sections have been added to it. A total of 14 sections have been repealed and removed from the bill Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam will have 170 provisions (instead of the original 167 provisions), and a total of 24 provisions have been changed. Two new provisions and six sub-provisions have been added and six provisions have been repealed or deleted from the bill. —*ANI*

Under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, police custody under general criminal laws has been increased from 15 days to 90 days *PHOTO: PTI*

LAKHS AFFECTED

NEET-UG 2024 row: Sibal demands SC probe

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Amid the raging row over medical entrance exam NEET, former HRD minister Kapil Sibal on Sunday demanded a probe by Supreme Court-appointed officials into allegations of irregularities and called on the government to have a thorough consultation with all states as to how this examination is to be held in future.

In an interview with PTI, the Rajya Sabha MP also hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue, saying if the testing system in any examination becomes corrupt then it is "not really neat for PM to remain silent".

Sibal said what is even more surprising and disappointing is that whenever something like this happens and there is corruption under the aegis of the present government, the "andh bhakts" start blaming the UPA for it and that is most unfortunate because they don't seem to be fully educated before making statements of this nature.

Kapil Sibal *PHOTO: PTI*

He pointed out that the NEET regulation was introduced in 2010 by the Medical Council of India (MCI) through its board of directors. The MCI was under the ministry of health and not under the ministry of education.

"So, I as the minister of HRD had nothing to do with this. The medical council of India board of governors introduced a regulation, saying there should be a national eligibility test for students getting admitted to MBBS course," he said.

- Sibal said what is even more surprising is that whenever something like this happens and there is corruption under the aegis of the present government, the "andh bhakts" start blaming the UPA for it and that is most unfortunate because they don't seem to be fully educated before making statements of this nature

Sibal also hit out at Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for his remarks rejecting allegations of paper leak or rigging in the exam. "Let him go on social media and see how this is happening in Gujarat itself. The state of Gujarat is one of the progressive states, even in respect of corruption it seems to be somewhat progressive," he said, taking a swipe at BJP. —*PTI*

Sena leader's kin booked for carrying phone inside booth

MUMBAI, 16 JUNE

An FIR was registered against Mangesh Pandilkar, a relative of Shiv Sena leader Ravindra Waikar for allegedly carrying a mobile phone inside a counting centre in Maharashtra's Goregaon.

FIR has also been registered against a polling personnel Dinesh Gurav, who was an Encore (poll portal) operator with the Election Commission. The mobile phones have been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) to recover the data and fingerprints present on the phone are also being taken, the police said.

"We are also investigating the CCTV cameras of the Nesco Center, which may help us to find out how the mobile phone reached inside the centre and also investigating whether there are more accused involved in this case or trying to find out who supplied this mobile phone," Vanrai Police said.

Ravindra Waikar *PHOTO: PTI*

Notably, Ravindra Waikar won the Mumbai North-West constituency by a small margin of 48 votes.

The constituency witnessed a close fight between both Shiv Sena factions - Eknath Shinde's Waikar and Uddhav Thackeray's Amol Kirtikar. Further investigation is underway in the case and more details are awaited. —*ANI*

POST LS POLLS

INDIA bloc will support TDP for LS speaker's post: Raut

MUMBAI, 16 JUNE

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday said all partners of the Opposition INDIA bloc will try to ensure support for the ruling ally Telugu Desam Party (TDP) if it fields a candidate for the Lok Sabha speaker's election.

Talking to reporters, Raut claimed the Lok Sabha speaker's election will be crucial and if BJP gets the post, it will break the government-supporting parties like TDP, JD(U) and the political outfits of Chirag Paswan and Jayant Chaudhary.

"I hear the TDP wants to field its candidate. If that happens, INDIA bloc partners will discuss the issue and will try to ensure that all the INDIA alliance partners extend support to the TDP," he said.The Opposition should get the deputy speaker's post as per rule, the Rajya Sabha member said.

He claimed the NDA government is not a stable regime.

Asked about recent statements made by some Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leaders on BJP after the Lok Sabha polls, Raut said it is good if the RSS wants to correct "mistakes" of the past.

Sanjay Raut *PHOTO: PTI*

"We are keeping a watch over the unfolding developments," he said.

During a meeting of the National Democratic Alliance in the Central Hall of Parliament on 7 June, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was elected as leader of NDA Parliamentary Party, BJP Parliamentary Party and the leader of BJP in the Lok Sabha.

Raut claimed Modi was elected leader in the NDA parliamentary meeting and not in the BJP parliamentary party meet. —*PTI*

Suresh Gopi clarifies remarks about Indira Gandhi

T'PURAM 16 JUNE

A day after his reference to former prime minister Indira Gandhi as "mother of India" received widespread attention, Union Minister Suresh Gopi on Sunday clarified that he called the late leader the mother of the Congress party in the country and his remarks were misinterpreted by the media.

The actor-turned-politician said he was a person talking from the heart and he firmly believed that there was nothing wrong in what he said about Indira Gandhi.

What did I say? As far as the Congress is concerned... whether anyone likes it or not... K Karunakaran is the father of Congress party in Kerala. In India, its mother is Indira Gandhi. —*PTI*

Held discussions with stakeholders: LS speaker on relocation of statues in Parl

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Statues of freedom fighters and national icons spread across the Parliament complex have been relocated to a new enclosure on its premises, Prerna Sthal, following discussions with different stakeholders, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Sunday.

The relocation of the statues, he said, were done as part of a landscaping and beautification exercise.

Addressing reporters here, Birla also asserted that discussions were held from time to time with different stakeholders on the relocation of statues as such decisions were within the purview of the Office of the Lok Sabha Speaker.

"None of the statues have been removed, they have been relocated. There is no need to indulge in politics on this," the outgoing speaker said when asked about the opposition criticism on the relocation of the statues.

Om Birla said that the relocation of the statues were done as part of a landscaping and beautification exercise *PHOTO: PTI*

"From time to time, I have been discussing these issues with different stakeholders. People were of the view that having these statues at one place will help disseminate information about their lives and achievements in a better way," Birla said.

The statues of Mahatma Gandhi and B R Ambedkar, earlier located at prominent places on the Parliament premises, were places where opposition leaders gathered to protest against the government. —*PTI*

Mayawati ignored Bahujan movement: BSP founding member

LUCKNOW, 16 JUNE

Newly elected Samajwadi Party (SP) MP RK Chaudhary, one of the founders of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), has claimed BSP chief Mayawati has been ignoring the Bahujan movement which has led to her party's rout in these Lok Sabha polls.

Now, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav is taking forward the Bahujan movement, demanding social equality for backward castes and disadvantaged communities, with the slogan of 'PDA' (backward, Dalit and minority), said Chaudhary, a four-time MLA and former state minister who is counted among Uttar Pradesh's prominent Dalit leaders.

In a conversation with PTI, Choudhary, who has been elected MP from the Mohanlalganj seat on an SP ticket, discussed among other things the BSP's falling graph and what future holds for the party founded by Kanshi Ram.

RK Chaudhary and Mayawati *PHOTO: PTI*

According to him, the core Dalit politics in Uttar Pradesh has become leaderless at the moment, but in the coming times, the SP will carry forward the flame of Bahujanism awakened by Kanshi Ram.

When asked about the reasons for the BSP not being able to win even one seat in the recent Lok Sabha elections, Choudhary said, "Mayawati ji has been our leader. We respect her. But if anyone has ended Kanshi Ram ji's movement, it is Behen ji (Mayawati). Now, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav has started walking on the path of taking that movement forward." —*PTI*

THANKS TO RAGA

Constitution's mini version piques interest

LUCKNOW, 16 JUNE

Measuring roughly 20 centimetres in length and nine centimetres in breadth, a leather-bound copy of the Constitution, which was frequently flashed by former Congress President Rahul Gandhi during the Lok Sabha elections has a deep Lucknow connection thanks to its publishers, who first printed it in 2009.

And if publishers Eastern Book Company are to be believed, people have started showing more interest in the coat pocket edition of the Constitution after Gandhi pulled it out on several occasions during the campaign.

Sumeet Malik, one of the directors of the Eastern Book Company, told PTI that the idea of printing a court pocket edition came from Supreme Court advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, who suggested that they should publish a version that fits easily in the lawyers' court pockets.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi holds a copy of Constitution's mini version during an election campaign *PHOTO: ANI*

"The first edition was launched in 2009 and there have been about 16 editions of this book, which have been published so far. And over the years, these copies have been purchased by many lawyers and judges, and also given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Ram Nath Kovind when he became the President of India," said Malik.

He added that the book has also been gifted by dignitaries to each other. Explaining the dimension of the coat pocket Constitution, Malik said that they used Bible paper which is very thin. When asked whether people started evincing more interest in this book after Rahul Gandhi started flashing this book at his election rallies, Malik said, "People are now asking for it and they have evinced more interest in it ever after Rahul started flashing the book at his poll meetings and election rallies, and now orders have started coming in."

"In the first edition, we had sold about 700 - 800 copies. When we came to the last edition (16th), we were selling about 5,000-6,000 copies per edition. We hope that in this year, with so much information spreading about this, more copies will be sold," he added. —*PTI*

India set to be 6th nation to have deep sea mission

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Union Earth Sciences Minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday said India is set to become the sixth country to have its own deep-sea mission.

Chairing a meeting to discuss the ministry's 100-day action plan, Singh expressed pride and happiness on the progress of the deep-sea mission and India being among the very few nations to achieve this feat.

He asked institutes to focus on achieving a resilient blue economy to empower people dependent on the ocean and its energy for livelihood.

Singh said the deep-sea mission is not limited to mineral exploration but development of ocean sciences and exploration of flora and fauna and conservation of marine biodiversity.

He lauded the National institute of Ocean Technology's (NIOT) efforts for the development of Matsyayaan 6000, which can dive 6,000 metres deep into the ocean. He directed officials to complete the first stage of the vessel's harbour trial by September and finish the subsequent ones by 2026. Singh appreciated the ministry for working in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to develop a "titanium hull" for the vessel that can bear extreme pressure.

Jitendra Singh *PHOTO: PTI*

He also reviewed progress on the development of self-floatation technology to deal with emergency conditions and be submerged for 72 hours.

The deep-sea mission has the potential to contribute greatly to the overall growth of Indian economy, Singh said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Bihar: Boat capsizes in Ganga river, 6 missing

PATNA, 16 JUNE

Six people went missing after a boat capsized in the Ganga river in Barh sub-division of Patna district on Sunday, officials said. "The mishap took place at around 9.15am near Umanath ganga ghat when the boat carrying 17 people, mostly belonging to a family, overturned midway. The boat overturned and sank in the middle of the Ganga river. While 11 people have been rescued so far...some of them managed to swim to safety and reach the shore of the river, six are still missing," Shubham Kumar, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (Barh) told reporters.On getting information, officials of the district administration and police personnel reached the spot and started rescue operations with the help of locals to find the missing people, said the SDM. *—PTI*

4 labourers killed in truck collision in UP's Ghaziabad

GHAZIABAD, 16 JUNE

Four people died and 18 were injured when the truck they were in was hit by another truck coming from behind near Muradnagar, a police officer said on Sunday.According to Additional DCP Traffic, Ghaziabad, Veerendra Kumar, the incident happened at around 1.15 am Sunday when the trucks were passing the Peripheral Expressway under the Muradnagar Police Station area.The mini-truck, an Eicher Canter, was on its way from Sonipat in Haryana to Hardoi carrying some brick kiln workers, Kumar said.The deceased have been identified as Mayadevi, 45, Irshad, 30, Najuman, 60, and Shamina, 20, all residents of Hardoi district, Kumar told PTI. *—PTI*

Nagpur factory blast: Death toll rises to 9

NAGPUR, 16 JUNE

The death toll in the blast at an explosives factory in Maharashtra's Nagpur district has gone up to nine with the last surviving person succumbing to his injuries, officials said on Sunday. Pramod Chavare died of his burn injuries at a private medical facility here on Saturday night, Dande Hospital's director Dr Pinak Dande told PTI. Nine injured persons were subsequently admitted to two private hospitals in the city. While six of them died during treatment on Thursday, three others succumbed over the last two days.The deceased included six women. Most of the victims were working in the factory's packaging unit when the explosion took place, according to police. *—PTI*

Firing at Salman's home: 1 held from Rajasthan

MUMBAI, 16 JUNE

The Mumbai Police have registered a new case in connection with firing outside actor Salman Khan's residence here in April and arrested one person from Rajasthan on charges of criminal intimidation, an official said on Sunday. The accused has been identified as Banwarilal Laturlal Gujar,25, hailing from Bundi in Rajasthan, the crime branch official said. Gurjar had allegedly uploaded a video on his YouTube channel in which he said "Lawrence Bishnoi, Goldy Brar and other gang members are with me and I am going to kill Salman Khan as he did not apologise yet", the official said. The accused made the video on a highway in Rajasthan and uploaded it on his channel. Considering the seriousness of the case, a team was sent to Rajasthan for an investigation the official said.*—PTI*

Protests mar Syro-Malabar Church's uniform mass

Kerala church said it will oust priests who do not implement uniform mass

KOCHI, 16 JUNE

Various Catholic churches under the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese here on Sunday witnessed protests by a section of laity against the ultimatum issued by the Syro-Malabar Church in connection with the implementation of uniform Holy Mass.

On the premises of some churches, faithful, including senior citizens and women, tore copies of a recent circular issued by Syro-Malabar Catholic Church head Raphael Thattil and Apostolic Administrator of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese Bosco Puthoor in this regard.

Thattil is also the major archbishop of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese.

In some other churches, they could be seen putting the circular in the waste bin and even burning it.

The Syro-Malabar Church recently warned to oust from the Catholic Church priests who do not comply with its directive to implement a uniform Holy Mass in the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese from 3 July.

However, the protesting laity on Sunday said they would not accept the Synod decision to go ahead with the uniform holy mass and wanted the years-long practice of performing the ritual facing the faithful to be continued.

Extending complete support to a significant section of priests in the archdiocese who had announced that they would continue to offer Holy Mass facing the people even after 3 July, the faithful said the church authorities could not take any action against them.

"The Mass is part of our lives and faith. We do not want any change in the practice, which has been continuing for years. We won't accept the directives of the Synod," an elderly devotee said during the protest at the Elamkulam church here.

In the circular issued last week, Thattil and Puthoor were quoted as saying that "priests who do not obey our decision from 3 July will be treated as those who have left the Catholic Church fraternity. Such priests will be barred from offering Holy Mass in the Catholic Church from 3 July."

However, the Archdiocese Protection Council, a platform of priests and laity who oppose the Church authorities' decision to impose a uniform Holy Mass, had rejected the circular and said they would continue to conduct the Mass facing the faithful. *—PTI*

In some other churches, they could be seen putting the circular in the waste bin and even burning it *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Ensure 1% quota for transgenders: Cal HC to WB govt

KOLKATA, 16 JUNE

The Calcutta High Court has directed the West Bengal government to ensure one per cent reservation for transgender people in all public employment in the state.

Noting that the state government adopted a policy of equal treatment in employment to transgenders, the court said the reservation has, however, not yet been made for them.

Justice Rajasekhar Mantha directed the chief secretary of the West Bengal government to ensure one per cent reservation for transgenders in all public employment.

The High Court order was passed on a petition by a transgender people, who succeeded in the Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) 2014 and also in the TET 2022, but was not called for counseling or interview.

In the order passed on Friday, Justice Mantha noted that the Supreme Court had declared in a 2014 case that 'hijras' and eunuchs, apart from binary genders, be treated as "third gender" for the purpose of safeguarding their rights under Part III of the Constitution.

The apex court had also upheld transgender peoples' right to decide their self-identified gender, and directed the Centre and state governments to grant legal recognition of their gender identity such as male, female or as third gender.

Justice Mantha also noted that the top court had directed the Centre and the state governments to take steps to treat them as socially and educationally backward classes of citizens, and "extend all kinds of reservation in cases of admission in educational institutions and for public appointments".

The West Bengal Chief Secretary had informed the High Court that the state's Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare on 30 November, 2022, made a notification that transgender persons were entitled to equal opportunity of employment without any discrimination. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

11th suicide in Kota: JEE aspirant hangs self in room

JAIPUR, 16 JUNE

A 17-year-old youth preparing for IIT-JEE competitive exam committed suicide by hanging himself at his room in Rajasthan's Kota city, police said on Sunday.

Ayush Jaiswal, a resident of Bihar's Motihari, was staying at a paying guest house near Samrat Chowk of Mahaveer Nagar area to prepare for the competitive exam.

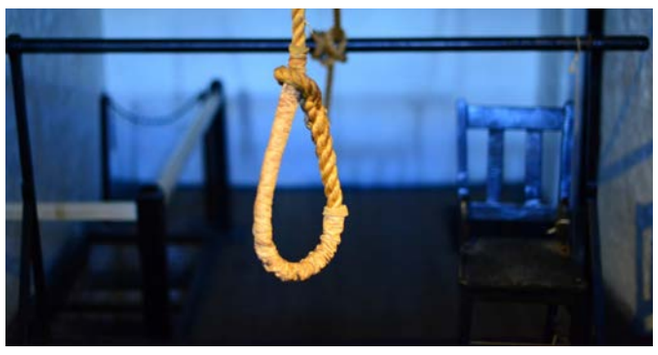
His friends informed the paying guest house owner when he did not come out of his room till Saturday night, police said.

"A boy preparing for competitive exam committed suicide on Saturday night. He was found hanging in his room. No suicide note has been recovered yet. The post-mortem will be conduct after his family members arrive here," said Mahaveer Nagar SHO Mahendra Maru. He said that the paying guest house owner informed the police when the student did not open the door.

On receiving information, a team reached the spot and broke the door lock and found the student hanging.

The police brought him down and took him to the New Medical College Hospital, where the doctors declared him dead.

This is the 11th suicide committed by any student preparing for competitive exam in education hub Kota this year so far. *—PTI*



Ayush Jaiswal, a resident of Bihar's Motihari, was staying at a paying guest house *PHOTO: PIXABAY*

- This is the 11th suicide committed by any student preparing for competitive exam in education hub Kota this year so far

MASSIVE FIRE BREAKS OUT IN SOLAN FOREST

SOLAN, 16 JUNE

A fire broke out in the forests of Solan in Himachal Pradesh. Forest officials and fire tenders reached the spot to carry out the fire extinguishing procedure.

A local said, "The fire has been going on for two-three days now. Controlling the fire is getting difficult, even though all the villagers have been trying for some time. We tried hard to control it but failed in the attempt. Forest officials are present here and they said that it would be controlled soon."

Earlier, the Himachal Pradesh forest department recorded over 1,500 forest fire incidents in the state.

As per data available from the department, over 13,000 hectares of forest land have been damaged in fire incidents reported during the past 50 days.

The fire season in the hill state starts from 15 April to 30 June. *—ANI*

UPSC EXAM

Candidates leave an exam centre after taking the UPSC Civil Services (Preliminary) exam, in Nagpur on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

COW HEAD THROWN INTO TEMPLE IN MP; 4 BOOKED

RATLAM, 16 JUNE

The stringent National Security Act (NSA) has been invoked against four people accused of throwing the severed head of a cow on a temple premises in Madhya Pradesh's Jaora town, a police official said.

Two motorcycle-borne people allegedly threw the bovine's body parts on the temple premises in the wee hours of Friday which led to tension in the town located in Ratlam district, as per officials. Four people were subsequently arrested under various Indian Penal Code sections for hurting religious sentiments and other offences, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Manoj Kumar Singh told reporters.

The four accused, identified as Salman Mevati,24, Shakir Qureshi,19, Noshad Qureshi,40, and Shahrukh Sattar,25"Mevati and Qureshi were held on Friday while Noshad and Sattar were arrested on Thursday.

Noshad has 20 cases against him and has also been externed once from the district," he said.

After the incident on Friday, some Hindu outfits staged a protest and gave a call for Jaora bandh. *—PTI*

- Some Hindu outfits staged a protest and gave a call for Jaora bandh

Delhi water crisis: Centre has to intervene, says Atishi

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Amid the water crisis in Delhi, Minister Atishi on Sunday said that if the Centre does not intervene in the situation, it will not improve and the BJP should talk to its government in Haryana and get more water for Delhi.

Atishi today wrote a letter to Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora urging the deployment of police personnel to protect major pipelines in the national capital.

Speaking to ANI, Atishi said, "Yesterday, the main water pipeline of South Delhi, which comes from Sonia Vihar, provides water to the entire South Delhi, there was a leakage in that water pipeline. It seems that some conspiracy is going on and I have also written a letter to the Police Commissioner today in this regard."

"I have also spoken to the Police Commissioner that the main water distribution lines should be provided security by the police. But this is not the time for allegations and counter-allegations, this is not the time for dirty politics. There is a whole life for allegations and counter-allegations. I would request the BJP to talk to its government in Haryana and get more water for Delhi. If the central government does not intervene in this situation, it will not improve," Atishi added.

Atishi, in her letter to the Commissioner, mentioned that the maintenance team worked for six hours to repair the leakage problem, exacerbating the water crisis in South Delhi.

Following the same, BJP MP from West Delhi, Kamaljeet Sehrawat and other party workers held a 'Matka Phod' (break earthen pots) protest in Delhi's Najafgarh. *—PTI*

Police personnel extinguish a fire during protest by BJP against the Delhi Jal Board over ongoing Delhi water crisis on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

- Atishi, in her letter to the Commissioner, mentioned that the maintenance team worked for six hours to repair the leakage problem, exacerbating the water crisis in Delhi

HEART WRENCHING TALE

Son still awaits martyred father's return

ANANTNAG, 16 JUNE

In a heart-wrenching tale of love and loss, seven-year-old Kabir remains unaware of the harsh reality that his father will never return and the young boy relentlessly sends voice messages to Colonel Manpreet Singh's number, pleading with him to come back.

"Papa bus ek baar aa jao, phir mission pe chale jana (Papa, please come back once, and then you can resume your duties)."

Some of these heartfelt messages are whispered in secrecy to avoid his mother's watchful gaze, as Kabir implores his father to make a video call.

Colonel Singh's final act of valour came during a joint operation on 13 September last year, when he along with other soldiers engaged in a fierce gun battle with terrorists in the forests surrounding Gadool village. Despite their courage, Colonel Singh, Major Aashish Dhonchak, J&K Police Deputy Superintendent Humanyun Bhat and Sepoy Pardeep Singh made the ultimate sacrifice, leaving a void in the hearts of those who knew and admired them.

A revered commanding officer of the 19 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) unit, Colonel Singh is remembered as a hero in the worst terrorism-hit areas of Larkipora, Zaldoora and Kokernag in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Many locals remember him as a symbol of bravery, leadership and selfless sacrifice in these areas that are mainly the Area of Responsibility, or AOR in army parlance, of the 19 RR. His legacy lives on in the hearts of people.

The absence of Colonel Singh weighs heavy on his family members, particularly his wife Jagmeet who vividly recalls the time when he planted two Chinar trees and affectionately named them after their children -- Kabir and Vani.

Remembering her last conversation with him, which lasted 32 seconds, Jagmeet said, "Operation mein hoon (I am in operation) were his last words before I did not hear from him ever."

Colonel Singh's dedication to the community extended beyond his military duties.

He was instrumental in rehabilitation efforts, particularly in helping those addicted to drugs find a path to recovery. Colonel Singh's impact on empowering women and fostering a sense of community through sports and education is fondly remembered by those who knew him. *—PTI*

Son of Colonel Manpreet Singh salutes as family members and relatives mourn near his mortal remains before his last rites *PHOTO: PTI*

ZSI scientists discover new eel species in Odisha

BERHAMPUR, 16 JUNE

Scientists of the Zoological Survey of India's (ZSI) regional centre at Gopalpur in Odisha's Ganjam district have discovered a new species of snake eel from different estuarine ecosystems in the state, an official said.

The new species is named 'Ophichthus Suryai' to honour Surya Kumar Mohanty, former joint director of state fishery department, the official said.

At least six specimens have been collected from the Subarnarekha river at Talasara in Balasore district, Paradip in Jagatsinghpur district and Bahuda river near Sunapur in Ganjam district at different times last year.

"After conducting deep studies and various tests, including DNA at the ZSI's laboratory, we confirm that it was a new species," said Anil Mohapatra, senior scientist, Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC) of ZSI, Gopalpur.

PHOTO: X/@@SCI_BUZZ

The new species can be distinguished from its closely allied congeners Ophichthus alleni, Ophichthus zophistius, and Ophichthus altipennis, and other members in this genus by having the dorsal fin origin (DFO) just above or slightly anterior to the gill opening, its unique vertebral count and teeth patterns consisting of multiple rows on both maxilla and mandible, said Mohapatra, who led the discovery.

Examination of morphological, meristic, and molecular characters confirmed the specimens are unique and described as a new species, he added. *—PTI*

FATHER'S DAY SPECIAL

At a seminar held at the Telangana State Police Academy for IAS trainees, N Venkateswarlu, Superintendent of Police and deputy director of the academy saluted his daughter, N Uma Harathi, IAS officer, (2022 batch) on the eve of Father's day. The gesture of the father feeling proud of his daughter topping the UPSC gathered a lot of attention from netizens ***PHOTO: PTI***

Eid: Festival of sacrifice & Prophet Ibrahim's devotion

Muslim pilgrims rest in Muzdalifah, on the second day of the annual hajj pilgrimage, near the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia ***PHOTO: PTI***

Millions of Muslims around the world are preparing to celebrate Eid al-Adha, the "Festival of Sacrifice". The joyous occasion falls on the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the final month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Eid al-Adha holds immense significance, marking the second major Islamic holiday after Eid al-Fitr, which concludes holy month of Ramadan.

Eid al-Adha transcends celebration; it's a time for deep reflection. Muslims reflect on the importance of sacrifice, strengthen family bonds, and share blessings with those less fortunate within the community.

This celebratory period commemorates the Quranic tale of Prophet Ibrahim's unwavering faith and willingness to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, as an act of obedience to Allah. According to Islamic belief, Allah intervened, sparing Ishmael and providing a ram in his place.

Qurbani: The spirit of sharing

The central act of Eid al-Adha is Qurbani, the sacrifice of an animal – a sheep, goat, cow, or camel. This ritual embodies the spirit of sharing and compassion.

The meat from the sacrificed animal is traditionally divided into three parts: one-third for the family, one-third for relatives and friends, and the remaining third for the poor and needy.

Eid al-Adha and Hajj: A special confluence

Eid al-Adha takes on added significance because it coincides with the third day of Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia, considered the fifth pillar of Islam. Hajj is an obligatory journey for physically and financially able Muslims to undertake at least once in their lifetime.

Around 2.5 million pilgrims from across the globe converge on the holy cities for this spiritual journey.

Festivities and traditions

The celebration of Eid al-Adha stretches over three days. Muslims traditionally begin with special Eid prayers held in congregation at mosques or open-air grounds called Eidgah.

These prayers take place just after dawn and are followed by a short sermon. Following the prayers, the act of Qurbani takes place, mandatory for Muslims who have the financial means.

Eid al-Adha is synonymous with feasting. Muslim families prepare elaborate meals featuring a variety of delectable dishes, often incorporating the fresh meat from the Qurbani sacrifice.

Popular dishes include kebabs, haleem (a hearty stew), and biryani (a fragrant rice dish). The celebratory character of Eid al-Adha extends beyond feasts. Families and friends gather, sharing laughter and strengthening bonds. For children, these gatherings create cherished memories.

Pilgrims commence the final rites of Hajj

Masses of pilgrims on Sunday embarked on a symbolic stoning of the devil in Saudi Arabia.

The stoning is among the final rites of the Hajj, which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. It came a day after more than 1.8 million pilgrims congregated on a sacred hill in Mount Ararat outside the holy city of Mecca, which Muslim pilgrims visit to perform the annual five-day rituals of Hajj.

Pilgrims will spend the next three days in Mina, where they walk long distances on pedestrian-only streets toward a multi-story complex housing large pillars.

There, they cast seven pebbles each at three pillars in a ritual meant to symbolise the casting away of evil and sin.

While in Mina, they will visit Mecca to perform "tawaf," circumambulation, which is circling the Kaaba in the Grand Mosque counterclockwise seven times.

They will make another circumambulation, known as Farewell Tawaf, at the end of Hajj and as they prepare to leave the holy city.

Once the Hajj is over, men are expected to shave their heads and remove the shroud-like white garments worn during pilgrimage, and women to snip a lock of hair in a sign of renewal and rebirth.

—Salar News with inputs from Obaidur Rahman Nadwi, Faculty Member of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Don't expect a ceasefire in Gaza anytime soon

When the UN security council voted in favour of a resolution backing the latest ceasefire deal for Gaza on 10 June, the only member state to abstain was Russia. It did so, it said, because of insufficient assurances that Israel would abide by the deal's terms. China supported the resolution, but doubted whether there had been notable developments since the previous ceasefire motion. The other 13 states were supportive if not overly optimistic.

Whether progress is now made depends on several factors. Prominent among these are how the war goes from here, the Israeli political environment and the extent of pressure on Israel from the Washington for a ceasefire.

The four hostages released by Israeli forces were certainly welcomed home to Israel but the remarkable element in their release was that they were in good physical health. This was after eight months of captivity in an intense war zone and suggests that Hamas is very far from defeat if it can maintain that degree of organisation for so long when faced persistently with overwhelming firepower.

It is one more sign that Hamas is proving far more resilient than the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) or Israeli intelligence and security agencies expected.

Much of Gaza has been reduced to little more than rubble, at least 37,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, including more than 15,000 children. Another 10,000 people are missing, over 80,000 have been injured, and the World Health Organisation is reporting 8,000 children currently with symptoms of acute malnutrition.

Taking the bait

From the start of the Israeli response to the October 7 atrocities, there was a risk that the IDF was falling into a trap of Hamas's making. Given the skill of Hamas's preparations and the ability to maintain high levels of security until the day of the attack, there was a strong probability that the Hamas planners had thought the whole thing through. Moreover, this would have included planning for multiple scenarios, most of them no doubt focused on a very strong Israeli retaliation.

Remember that barely three weeks into the war, some analysts were already pointing to the dangers for Israel of embarking on a ground invasion. By early November, much international opinion outside the west had moved markedly against Israel in the wake of the intensive bombing of urban areas and the rapidly rising death toll. Despite this mood, which increasingly spread to northwards as it became more difficult to disrupt the Hamas paramilitaries, the IDF made more intensive use of the Dahiya doctrine.

Young victims

Even the freeing of the hostages fits into this pattern. Four Israelis were successfully freed, but at the cost of the intensive bombardment of a densely populated refugee camp, the deaths of up to 274 Palestinians and the injuring of many hundreds more. For many observers what makes it worse is the high proportion of children among those killed and injured.

Israel is now trapped in an intensely violent stalemate. In the face of this, Biden's current proposal is for a three-phase transition to a settlement, starting with a long ceasefire to allow negotiations to proceed. Perhaps progress can be made but there is considerable doubt among close observers of Israeli politics that Netanyahu has any intention of seeing an end to the war in the next few months.

On the Palestinian side, there are certainly some differences between the Hamas military leadership in Gaza and the overall political leadership in Qatar. But Israeli actions in the occupied West Bank, especially persistent violence against Palestinians by Israeli settlers and the IDF, mean more support for Hamas and confidence in its ultimate success.

Given the predicament that Netanyahu is now in what will be uppermost in his mind will be the US election in November and the chance of Donald Trump returning to the White House, giving him far more of a blank cheque in terms of US support for his government.

There desperately needs to be a swift end to the fighting. But it is much more likely that this appalling war has many more months to run. *—The Conversation*

It is one more sign that Hamas is proving far more resilient than the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) or Israeli intelligence and security agencies expected ***PHOTO: PTI***

The world remains ill-prepared for the next pandemic

The World Health Organisation (WHO) took an important step by adopting useful revisions to the existing legally-binding International Health Regulations and yet it's not enough to prevent it ***PHOTO: ANI***

The international community's recent failure to conclude a global pandemic agreement leaves large gaps in our capacity to deal with the next major infectious disease emergency.

The risk of another pandemic like COVID - the worst in a century - is increasing. The World Health Organisation (WHO) took an important step by adopting useful revisions to the existing legally-binding International Health Regulations.

But while this advance is something to celebrate, it is not enough. Even if governments approve the revised regulations, our best chance of preventing history repeating itself lies in a pandemic agreement.

Global responses to health hazards that cross borders date back to an international sanitary conference in 1851 which focused on measures to limit the spread of cholera. Since then, several initiatives have aimed to improve global health security, including the formation of the WHO itself in 1946.

Nonetheless, it was soon evident the new tools were limited in dealing with the increasingly complex and fast moving threat of zoonotic diseases (when an animal pathogen "spills over" to infect people).

Key changes to the International Health Regulations

Earlier this month, the 194 members of the WHO World Health Assembly passed by consensus several important amendments to the International Health Regulations, including:

•Adding a definition of a "pandemic emergency" to emphasise the importance of such events within the broader category of public health emergencies of international concern.

•Increasing the focus on prevention with specific mention of "preparedness"

•Strengthening equitable access to medical products and finance, with specific mention of "equity and solidarity", and a dedicated "coordinating financial mechanism"

•Requiring each state to establish a "national authority" to improve the implementation of the international health regulations within and among countries

•Requiring countries to build a core capacity for "risk communication including addressing misinformation and disinformation"

•Modifying the "decision instrument" to enhance the detection of emerging respiratory infections with high pandemic potential.

The proposals that didn't make it. Not all proposed amendment were achieved. Some commentators had advocated to incorporate the experience of countries in the Asia-Pacific region that used an elimination strategy to delay the spread of COVID, giving time to roll out vaccines and other interventions.

Such measures protected both high-income islands (Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Taiwan) as well as low and middle-income countries in continental Asia (Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia).

These nations generally achieved lower excess mortality than countries where the pandemic was less controlled. Similarly, the concept of elimination at source (sometimes called containment) wasn't included in this revision.

A range of other potential improvements also failed to make it into the final text. These included an emphasis on preventing zoonotic spillovers from animals, enhanced sharing of scientific data and specimens, and strengthened accountability.

All WHO member states now have 18 months to consider the proposed revisions. They may enter reservations to parts they disagree with, even though this may weaken the coherence of amendments.

Why we need greater global cooperation

A pandemic agreement could address the many needed reforms that go beyond the International Health Regulations.

But the negotiations to reach global agreement are proving contentious. There have been deep divisions between rich and poorer countries over the sharing and affordable pricing of vaccines, treatments and diagnostics for developing states.

From the threats of war to environmental devastation and pandemics, no country can unilaterally protect its citizens from the gravest shared threats to humanity.

But while the need for global solidarity and cooperation is greater than ever, support for many of the key areas of international law is failing.

We owe it to the memory of the more than 27 million people estimated to have died so far from COVID, and the rising threats to future generations, to do the best we can to achieve a safer and more secure world.

—The Conversation

Israel to start tactical pauses for Gaza aid

The 'tactical pause' applies to about 12 kilometres of road in the Rafah area

PHOTO: JULIAROBERTS

Clooney and Roberts help Biden raise $28M

LOS ANGELES, 16 JUNE

Some of Hollywood's brightest stars headlined a glitzy fundraiser for President Joe Biden on Saturday night, helping raise what his re-election campaign said was USD 28 million and hoping to energise would-be supporters for a November election that they argued was among the most important in the nation's history. George Clooney, Julia Roberts and Barbra Streisand were among those who took the stage at the 7,100-seat Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. Late-night host Jimmy Kimmel interviewed Biden and former President Barack Obama, who both stressed the need to defeat former President Donald Trump in a race that's expected to be exceedingly close. Kimmel asked if the country was suffering from amnesia about the presumptive Republican nominee, to which Biden responded, "all we gotta do is remember what it was like" when Trump was in the White House. *—AP*

8, including 2 children, injured in US shooting

MICHIGAN, 16 JUNE

At least eight people including two children sustained bullet injuries in an attack at a recreation area in Michigan, US on Saturday (local time). The suspect behind the attack was later found dead at a nearby home, CNN reported citing officials. The incident happened at Brooklands Plaza Splash Pad in Rochester Hills. Earlier, the police said the victim was contained at a house near the site of the incident. Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard said that the suspect was found dead at a nearby home. The victims who sustained injuries in the attack were transported to multiple hospitals with "varying kinds of injuries," Bouchard said. *—ANI*

Singapore to clean oil slick after boat hits fuel ship

KUALA LUMPUR, 16 JUNE

An oil spill caused by a dredger boat hitting a stationary cargo tanker has blackened part of Singapore's southern coastline, including the popular resort island of Sentosa, and sparked concerns it may threaten marine wildlife as a clean-up operation was underway Sunday. The Netherlands-flagged dredger Vox Maxima struck the Singaporean fuel supply ship Marine Honour on Friday. It damaged the cargo tank on Marine Honour, which leaked oil into the sea. Singapore's Maritime and Port Authority said in a statement late Saturday the oil leak from the vessel had been contained, and that the oil that escaped from the damaged tanker had been treated with dispersants. *—AP*

Taiwan detects 6 Chinese aircraft, 7 naval vessels

TAIPEI, 16 JUNE

Taiwan Ministry of National Defence (MND) said on Sunday that six Chinese military aircraft and seven naval vessels were tracked operating around Taiwan between 6 am (local time) on Saturday and the same time on Sunday. According to Taiwan's MND, four of the PLA aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's northern and southwest Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). After China's action, the Taiwanese armed forces monitored the situation and responded accordingly. On X, Taiwan's MND stated, "6 #PLA aircraft and 7 PLAN vessels operating around #Taiwan were detected up. 4 of the aircraft crossed the median line of #Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's northern and SW ADIZ. #ROCArmedForces have monitored the situation and responded accordingly." *—ANI*

Vehicles of Israel army patrolling the border area on Sunday **PHOTO: AP/PTI**

JERUSALEM, 16 JUNE

Israel's military announced on Sunday that it would pause fighting throughout daytime hours along a route in southern Gaza to free up a backlog of humanitarian aid deliveries destined for desperate Palestinians enduring a humanitarian crisis sparked by the war, now in its ninth month.

The "tactical pause" announced by the military, which applies to about 12 kilometres (7.4 miles) of road in the Rafah area, falls far short of a complete cease-fire in the beleaguered territory that has been sought by the international community, including Israel's top ally, the United States. If it holds, the limited halt in fighting could help address some of the overwhelming needs of Palestinians that have surged even more in recent weeks with Israel's incursion into Rafah. The army said the pause would begin at 8 am (0500 GMT) and remain in effect until 7 pm (1600 GMT). It said the pauses would take place every day until further notice. The pause is aimed at allowing aid trucks to reach the nearby Israel-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing, the main entry point for incoming aid, and travel safely to the Salah a-Din highway, a main north-south road, the military said. The crossing has suffered from a bottleneck since Israeli ground troops moved into Rafah in early May.

COGAT, the Israeli military body that oversees aid distribution in Gaza, said the route would increase the flow of aid to other parts of Gaza, including Khan Younis, Muwasi and central Gaza. Hard-hit northern Gaza, which was an early target in the war, is being served by goods entering from a crossing in the north.

The military said the pause came after discussions with the United Nations and international aid agencies. *—AP*

8 Israeli soldiers killed in southern Gaza ambush

GAZA, 16 JUNE

Hamas fighters killed eight Israeli soldiers traveling in military vehicles in Rafah after firing rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and then ambushing a support force deployed to the scene. The attacks on Saturday marked one of the deadliest days for Israeli soldiers in Gaza in months as its ground invasion of the southern region continues to ramp up. Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing, said in a statement its soldiers "carried out a complex ambush against enemy vehicles" in the Saudi neighbourhood of Tal as-Sultan district, western Rafah city. *—AP*

US army targets another Houthi radar sites in Yemen

DUBAI, 16 JUNE

The US military unleashed a wave of attacks targeting radar sites operated by Yemen's Houthi rebels after one merchant sailor went missing and the vessel he was on caught fire in the latest Houthi strike on shipping in the crucial Red Sea corridor, authorities said Saturday.

The attacks come as the US Navy faces the most intense combat it has seen since World War II in trying to counter the Houthi campaign — attacks the rebels say are meant to halt the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. However, the Iranian-backed rebel assaults often see the Houthis target ships and sailors who have nothing to do with the war while traffic remains halved through a corridor vital for cargo and energy shipments between Asia, Europe and the Mideast. *—AP*

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip gather amid the rubble of their neighbourhood to pray on Sunday ahead of Eid al-Adha. People here and the occupied West Bank are marking a sombre Eid as the Israeli military continues its deadly attacks more than eight months after the start of the war. More than 37,000 Palestinians have been killed so far **PHOTO: X/ @IHCENTOO**

'50,000 children in Gaza need treatment'

PALESTINE, 16 JUNE

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) says more than 50,000 children in the Gaza Strip require immediate medical treatment for acute malnutrition.

In a statement on Saturday, the agency noted "with continued restrictions to humanitarian access, people in Gaza continue to face desperate levels of hunger. UNRWA teams work tirelessly to reach families with aid, but the situation is catastrophic". UNICEF spokesperson James Elder also described how difficult it is to not only get aid into Gaza, but also to distribute it across the war-battered coastal enclave.

"More aid workers have been killed in this war than any war since the advent of the UN," he told Al Jazeera. On Wednesday, UNICEF had a mission to drive a truck full of nutritional and medical supplies for 10,000 children, Elder said. Their task was to deliver the aid, which was pre-approved by Israeli authorities, from Deir el-Balah to Gaza City, a 40km round trip. "It took 13 hours and we spent eight of those around checkpoints, arguing around paperwork – 'was it a truck or a van'," he said. "The reality is this truck was denied access. Those 10,000 children did not get that aid … Israel as the occupying power has the legal responsibility to facilitate that aid." *—Al Jazeera*

RIGHT CHOICE

A woman soldier wrapped in the LGBTQ+ flag attends a Pride march in Kyiv, Ukraine on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Russian forces kill inmates in detention facility centre

MOSCOW, 16 JUNE

Security forces stormed a detention centre in southern Russia on Sunday, killing inmates who had taken two members of staff hostage, Russian state news agency RIA Novosti reported Sunday.

The hostages at the pretrial detention centre in Rostov-on-Don were uninjured, said RIA Novosti, citing Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service. It said that the hostage takers had been "liquidated," with other local news outlets reporting that at least some of the prisoners had been killed.

Earlier, state news agency Tass, citing unnamed sources in law enforcement, had said that six hostage takers were in the central courtyard of the Rostov region's Detention Centre No. 1, armed with a penknife, a rubber baton and a fire ax. Images posted on social media appeared to show at least two of the hostage-takers wearing a headband that resembled the Islamic State's flag. Other images showed prisoners wielding knives. RT reported that three of the hostage-takers had already been sentenced on terrorism charges, including disseminating extremist information and plotting to blow up a Russian courthouse. IS have carried out a number of attacks on Russian soil in recent years, including most recently in March when gunmen opened fire on a crowd at a concert hall in suburban Moscow, killing 145 people. *—AP*

World leaders gather for Ukraine Peace Summit

OBBÜRGEN, 16 JUNE

Dozens of world leaders converged on a Swiss resort Saturday to discuss how to bring peace to war-ravaged Ukraine, though any hopes of a real breakthrough were muted by the absence of Russia.

More than two years into the war, the combatants remain as far apart as they've ever been, with Kyiv sticking to its demands that Russia leave all Ukrainian territory it has seized and Moscow pressing on with its grinding offensive that has already taken large swaths of eastern and southern Ukraine.

Despite Russia's absence from the conference at the Bürgenstock resort overlooking Lake Lucerne, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy suggested that one measure of the two-day event's success was "bringing back to the world the idea that joint efforts can stop war and establish a just peace."

About half of the roughly 100 delegations were led by heads of state and government. Analysts said turnout would be a key indicator about how much pull Ukraine and its staunch Western backers have with the broader international community. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday sought to cast a shadow over the Swiss-Ukrainian initiative for the conference. Some countries such as India, Turkey and Saudi Arabia that have retained ties, at times lucrative, with Moscow — unlike Western powers that have sanctioned Russia over the war — were also on hand.

China, which backs Russia, joined scores of countries that sat out the event. Beijing has said any peace process would require the participation of Russia and Ukraine, and has floated its own ideas for peace. *—AP*

World leaders meet at Ukraine Peace Summit on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

PAK PM VOWS TO END DEPENDENCY ON FOREIGN AID

ISLAMABAD, 16 JUNE

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has pledged to end Pakistan's dependency
o on foreign aid and IMF bailouts and surpass neighbouring nations in economic activity, as he outlined a series of bold reforms to reduce the cash-strapped government's expenses and revive the economy.

Sharif addressed the nation on Saturday and expressed hope that the next deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a bailout package would be the last in Pakistan's history.

The Pakistan government is currently in talks with the IMF for a loan estimated to be between USD 6 billion to USD 8 billion, as it strives to avert a default in a slow-paced economy.

He expressed commitment to reduce expenses and, within five years, provide education and skills to the youth. "Inshallah, this will be the last IMF programme in Pakistan's history. We will stand on our feet and surpass our neighbouring countries in economic activity," he said in the televised address.

Sharif said that there were countries in the world that sought assistance from the IMF once and never needed it again. "We have approached the IMF 24 to 25 times. I assure you today if we adhere to our programme and targets, the next IMF agreement will be the last in Pakistan's history," he said. *—PTI*

'Elimination of Taiwan is China's great nat'l cause'

BEIJING, 16 JUNE

China views the "annexation" and "elimination" of Taiwan as its great national cause, Taiwan's President William Lai Ching-te said, telling cadets at the military's premier academy they must know their enemy and not give in to defeatism.

Lai has faced sustained personal attacks from China, which views Taiwan as its own territory. Since assuming office last month, Beijing has branded him as a "separatist". China also deployed aircraft in Taiwan's airspace and staged a major military drill around Taiwan shortly after Lai's inauguration. He said only Taiwan's people can decide their future and has repeatedly offered talks with Beijing but has been rebuffed.

Speaking in Kaohsiung in the south of the island on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Whampoa Military Academy, Lai said today's cadets must recognise the challenges of the "new era".

"The biggest challenge is to face the powerful rise of China, [which is] destroying the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and regards Taiwan's annexation and the elimination of the Republic of China as the great rejuvenating cause of its people," he said.

"The highest mission is to bravely take up the heavy responsibility and grand task of protecting Taiwan, and safeguarding the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," he added. China's Taiwan Affairs Office did not answer calls on Sunday seeking comments about Lai's remarks.

Lai, at the event attended by senior military officials and also the top United States diplomat in Kaohsiung, Neil Gibson, said the cadets must defend Taiwan against being annexed by China and that the island's future can only be decided by its people. *—Al Jazeera*

'PUT ASIDE DIFFERENCES'

China promises more pandas for Australia

MELBOURNE, 16 JUNE

Chinese Premier Li Qiang's visit to Australia on Sunday focused on positive aspects of the bilateral relationship including shared giant pandas and a rebounding wine trade after he urged both countries to put aside their differences.

China's most powerful leader after President Xi Jinping arrived late Saturday in Adelaide, the capital of South Australia state, which has produced most of the Australian wine entering China since crippling tariffs were lifted in March that had effectively ended a 1.2 billion Australian dollar (USD 790 million) a year trade since 2020.

Li visited Adelaide Zoo, which has been home to China-born giant pandas Wang Wang and Fu Ni since 2009, before he was to have lunch at a restaurant at an Adelaide winery.

He announced that the zoo would be loaned another two pandas after the pair are due to return to China in November, China's Xinhua News Agency reported. The pair are the only pandas in the Southern Hemisphere and failed to produce offspring in Australia.

Li's visit is the first to Australia by a Chinese premier in seven years and marks an improvement in relations since Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's center-left Labor Party was elected in 2022.

Li noted that Albanese in November was the first Australian prime minister to visit China since 2016.

"China-Australia relations were back on track after a period of twists and turns, generating tangible benefits to the people of both countries," Li said, according to a translation released by the Chinese Embassy in Australia on Sunday.

Dozens of pro-China demonstrators and human rights protesters gathered outside the zoo before Li's visit. Relations collapsed over legislation that banned covert foreign interference in Australian politics, the exclusion of Chinese-owned telecommunications giant Huawei from rolling out the national 5G network due to security concerns, and Australia's call for an independent investigation into the causes of and responses to the Covid-19. *—AP*

Chinese Premier Li Qiang said that the zoo would be loaned another two pandas after the pair are due to return to China in November **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Coal import increases 13% to 26MT in April

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

The country's coal import rose by 13.2 per cent to 26.10 million tonne (MT) in April 2024 as buyers took fresh positions amid early onset of summer. The country had imported 23.05 MT of coal in the year-ago period, according to data compiled by B2B e-commerce company mjunction services ltd. This comes amid Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy stating that the country should increase domestic production of the fossil fuel and reduce coal imports. Of the total import in April, non-coking coal import stood at 17.40 MT against 15.15 MT in the year-ago month. Coking coal import was 4.97 MT against 4.77 MT. Coal imports in April were up by 8.93 per cent as against March when imports stood at 23.96 MT. *—PTI*

Auction 6 mineral blocks by 30 June: Centre to T'gana

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

The mines ministry has flagged that the Telangana government failed to auction any mineral blocks in past nine years and asked the state to put at least six mines on sale by the end of this month. According to sources, geological reports of eleven blocks have been handed over to the government of Telangana for auction. These blocks consist of five iron ore mines, five limestone blocks and one manganese block. Till date not even a single block has been put up for auction by Telangana even though the mines ministry has sent repeated reminders to the state government. In a recent letter to the Telangana government, the Mines Ministry asked the tate to notify a minimum of six blocks from the 11 for auction by 30 June, sources said. *—PTI*

PwC India expects upswing in M&A exchanges

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

PwC India anticipates an upswing in the India markets, especially in small to mid-size M&A (merger and acquisition) transactions and growth fundings driven by increasing investors' confidence. The year 2023 witnessed the emergence of a nuanced M&A landscape, with investors showing interests in diverse strategies and larger-scale ventures, even amid an overall decrease in PE investment, said Sanjeev Krishan, Chairperson, PwC in India. While PE deals were higher in volume, strategic deals dominated the top deals -- and domestic deals with group-level consolidations were a prominent theme. The first quarter of 2024 marked a resurgence in deal value and volume. *—PTI*

Guj: Essar to invest ₹30K cr in green hydrogen plant

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Essar Group plans to invest Rs 30,000 crore over the next four years in setting up a green hydrogen plant at Jamnagar in Gujarat as the metals-to-infrastructure conglomerate eyes clean energy as a key pillar for its new phase of growth. The conglomerate is looking to decarbonise its oil refinery in the UK, construct a green steel plant in Saudi Arabia, and build an LNG and electric ecosystem to decarbonise long-haul heavy trucks, Prashant Ruia, director of Essar Capital, which manages the group's portfolio of investments, said. It is also considering an entry into mining of critical minerals, mainly used in electric vehicle batteries. Essar Future Energy plans to develop 1 gigawatt of hydrogen capacity along with associated green molecules capacity of 1 million tonne per annum in Jamnagar in next four years. *—PTI*

FPIs pumped ₹11K crore last week on positive mkt cues

Net outflow stood at ₹3,064 crore so far till 14 June

The net inflow was in stark contrast to the net outflow of Rs 14,794 crore witnessed from 3-7 June **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Foreign investors made a strong comeback with a net inflow of Rs 11,730 crore (USD 1.4 billion) in the week ending 14 June, driven by positive signals from domestic and global markets.

The net inflow was in stark contrast to the net outflow of Rs 14,794 crore (USD 1.77 billion) witnessed in the preceding week from 3-7 June, data with the depositories showed.

With the latest flow, net outflow stood at Rs 3,064 crore in the month so far till 14 June.

"After the roller coaster ride in the market in the first week of June, stability has returned to the market as indicated by the sharp fall in India VIX from 27 on 4 June to 12.82 on 14 June. This fall in India VIX indicates the return of stability and a likely consolidation phase in the market," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Although in a coalition, the formation of the NDA government at the Centre for the third straight term fanned expectation of a continuation of policy reforms and economic growth, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said. On the global front, lower-than-expected inflation numbers in the US also raised hopes of one rate cut this year.

This also triggered a fall in the US treasury yield. These factors led to risk-taking sentiments among investors, resulting in increased flows into markets like India, Srivastava added. In May, FPIs pulled out Rs 25,586 crore from equities on poll jitters and withdrew more than Rs 8,700 crore in April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields. Before that, FPIs made a net investment of Rs 35,098 crore in March and Rs 1,539 crore in February, while they took out Rs 25,743 crore in January. The resilience of the market and the eagerness of retail investors to buy every dip in the market will force FPIs to reduce their selling. However, if the market continues to rally, FPIs may again turn sellers in India and buyers in other markets like Hong Kong, which are very cheap compared to India, Geojit's Vijayakumar said.

On the other hand, FPIs invested over Rs 5,700 crore in the debt market so far this month (till 14 June). *—PTI*

GLOBAL TRENDS TO DRIVE MKTS THIS WEEK: ANALYSTS

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

With the absence of any major immediate domestic trigger in sight, investors would focus on global trends and trading activity of foreign investors for further cues in a holiday-shortened week ahead, analysts said.

Movement of global oil benchmark Brent crude and rupee-dollar trend would also guide the market.

"This week is a truncated one with no major triggers expected. However, we anticipate sector-specific movements amid budget-related buzz. Key factors to watch will be progress of monsoon and institutional flows," said Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd Santosh Meena. On the global front, data from China, movement in the dollar index, and US bond yields will be crucial, he added. Equity markets will remain closed on Monday on account of Bakri Id. "This week, shortened by a holiday on Monday, will see participants looking to global markets, particularly the US, for cues in the absence of major events," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 299.41 points or 0.39 per cent, while the Nifty advanced 175.45 points or 0.75 per cent.. *—PTI*

LIC BIGGEST GAINER

Mcap of five of top most valued firms jumps ₹85,582cr

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

- Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm in the pack of top-10 companies, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, LIC, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and ITC

Five of the top-10 most valued firms together added Rs 85,582.21 crore in market valuation last week, with Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) emerging as the biggest gainer, in-line with positive trend in equities.

Last week, BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 299.41 points or 0.39 per cent. The 30-share barometer hit its all-time high of 77,145.46 on 13 June.

While Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India and LIC were the gainers, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and ITC faced erosion from their market valuation. The five firms together lost Rs 84,704.81 crore from market valuation.

The valuation of LIC jumped Rs 46,425.48 crore to Rs 6,74,877.25 crore, the most among the top-10 firms.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank rallied Rs 18,639.61 crore to Rs 12,14,965.13 crore.

Reliance Industries added Rs 10,216.41 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 19,98,957.88 crore.

The mcap of State Bank of India climbed Rs 9,192.35 crore to Rs 7,49,845.89 crore and that of Bharti Airtel went up by Rs 1,108.36 crore to Rs 8,11,524.37 crore.

However, the valuation of Hindustan Unilever dropped by Rs 22,885.02 crore to Rs 5,82,522.41 crore.

The mcap of TCS tumbled Rs 22,052.24 crore to Rs 13,86,433.05 crore and that of Infosys eroded by Rs 18,600.5 crore to Rs 6,18,030.37 crore.

ICICI Bank's valuation declined by Rs 11,179.27 crore to Rs 7,77,795.90 crore and that of ITC went lower by Rs 9,987.78 crore to Rs 5,38,216.34 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm in the pack of top-10 companies, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, LIC, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and ITC. *—PTI*

Sales of affordable homes fall 4% in top 8 cities in Jan-March

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Sales of affordable homes -- priced up to Rs 60 lakh each -- declined 4 per cent in eight major cities to 61,121 units during January-March this year on lower supply and higher demand for luxury apartments, according to PropEquity.

The top eight cities are -- Delhi-NCR, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune and Ahmedabad.

Real estate data analytic firm PropEquity data showed that sales of homes, costing up to Rs 60 lakh each stood at 6,3787 units in the January-March period of the last calendar year.

A lower supply of affordable homes is one of the key factors for this marginal fall in sales.

As per the PropEquity data, the fresh supply of homes, up to Rs 60 lakh each, declined to 33,420 units during January-March 2024 across these top eight cities from 53,818 units in the year-ago period.

Builders are focusing more on launching luxury apartments to encash a surge in demand for premium residential properties.

Profit margins are also high in luxury projects.

Housing sales in this price category declined to 2,35,340 units in the 2023 calendar year from 2,51,198 units in the preceding year.

During 2020 sales in this price category fell to 1,88,233 units.

However, sales bounced back in 2021 and 2022 to 2,17,274 units and 2,51,198 units, respectively.

Sales declined again in 2023 to 2,35,340 units compared to the preceding year.

Sales in Bengaluru decreased to 2,801 units from 5,193 units.

The company tracks over 1,73,000 projects of 57,500 developers across 44 cities in India on a real-time basis. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

- Builders are focusing more on launching luxury apartments to encash a surge in demand for premium residential properties. Profit margins are also high in luxury projects

PHOTO: FREEPIK

IBA demands Rs 90/kg fixed rate for compressed biogas

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Indian Biogas Association (IBA) is demanding a fixed rate of Rs 90 per kg for procurement of biogas by oil and gas marketing companies, from the government, citing environmental benefits and to boost the sector.

The IBA will soon put up the suggestion about fixing the procurement price of the biogas, along with other recommendations, for boosting the sector before the newly appointed Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi.

While the retail selling price of compressed biogas (CBG) is aligned with CNG (compressed natural gas), the procurement price is unfortunately linked to the retail selling price (RSP) of CNG, IBA Chairman Gaurav Kedia said.

Consequently, he said with CNG prices in New Delhi hovering at Rs 75-80 per kg, the procurement price of CBG by oil and gas marketing companies falls to Rs 59 per kg (excluding GST).

"This pricing structure fails to recognise the inherent environmental value of CBG. Ideally, CBG should command a premium (of Rs 10-15), reflecting its green credentials. It should be around Rs 90 per kg," he said. The successful implementation of the SATAT (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation) programme is expected to significantly reduce India's import bill by USD 15 billion, representing roughly 10 per cent. SATAT is a government initiative to promote CBG as an alternative, green transport fuel. *—PTI*

AIR-CONDITIONER MKT TO REACH ₹50K CR BY FY29

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

The India room air-conditioners (RAC) market is likely to grow at a healthy CAGR of 12 per cent to reach Rs 50,000 crore by FY 2028-29, Tata group firm Voltas said in its latest annual report.

The competition in the Indian RAC market has "intensified" with the presence of homegrown and leading foreign players, said Voltas, a market leader in the segment.

Moreover, the competitive "intensity is going to increase" further in the near future, the company said while discussing challenges and opportunities.

Factors like increasingly hot summers, rising disposable incomes, and the quest for a better lifestyle with easy access to consumer finance are likely to drive growth for this room air-conditioner segment.

"The Indian RAC market is expected to grow at a healthy CAGR of 12 per cent to reach a figure of Rs 50,000 crores by 2028-29," said Voltas. *—PTI*

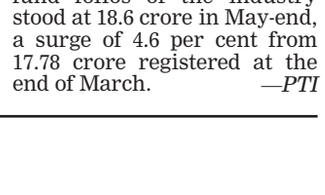


PHOTO: FREEPIK

M'RASHTRA GOVT IS OWNER

Dharavi land not transferred to Adani: Sources

MUMBAI, 16 JUNE

The multi-crore Dharavi slum redevelopment project involves no land transfer to the Adani group but to the Maharashtra government's departments, and the Ahmedabad-based conglomerate, as a project developer, will build houses that will be handed over to the same departments for allotment to residents of Asia's biggest slums, sources said.

Denying allegations of land grab made by MP Varsha Gaikwad, sources close to the project said land parcels are to be transferred only to Dharavi Redevelopment Project/Slum Rehabilitation Authority (DRP/SRA) of the state government's housing department.

Adani Group, which won the Dharavi slum redevelopment project in open international bidding, will build tenements - housing and commercials - through its joint venture company Dharavi Redevelopment Project Private Ltd (DRPPL) with the Maharashtra government, again hand them over to DRP/SRA of the Maharashtra government for allocation as per survey findings.

Trying to clear misconceptions over the project, sources said as per the tender, the land remains allocated to DRP/SRA at rates decided by the government. Calling allegations that Dharavikars will be thrown out of Dharavi and rendered homeless as pure fictional and a mere figment to create anxiety amongst the masses, sources said the government's 2022 order provides for a condition that each and every tenement holder of Dharavi, eligible or ineligible, will be given a home.

No Dharavikar will be displaced under the DRP/SRA scheme, they insisted. Holders of tenements in existence on or before 1 January, 2000, will be eligible for in-situ rehabilitation. Those existing between 1 January, 2000, and 1 January, 2011, will be allotted homes under PMAY outside Dharavi anywhere in MMR for just Rs 2.5 lakh or via rental housing. The tenements -- which exist post 1 January, 2011, till the cutoff date (to be declared by the government) -- will get homes under the state government's proposed affordable rental home policy with an option of hire-purchase. The project seeks to improve the quality of life for over one million residents of Dharavi through a human-centric approach. *—PTI*

The project seeks to improve the quality of life for over one million residents of Dharavi through a human-centric approach **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

Mutual funds industry adds 81 L new investor accounts in April-May FY25

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

The mutual fund industry has added over 81 lakh investors' accounts in the first two months of the current fiscal (FY25), mainly due to consistent marketing efforts, celebrity endorsements and dedicated work of the distribution network.

Additionally, changing perceptions about fixed deposits, which no longer offer competitive returns compared to mutual funds, and the rise in income levels and accessibility to financial markets have also contributed to the rise in new investors, Trivesh D, COO of stock trading platform Tradejini, said.

Going ahead, the outlook for mutual fund folios remains strong, supported by the ongoing bull run in the stock market, solid risk management practices, continuous investor education, and consistent marketing efforts, he added.

Moreover, the industry will continue to see decent growth as savers increasingly look for alternative avenues to create wealth for their long-term goals, experts said.

"As India's per capita income grows, investors will look to save money in asset classes, which have the potential to beat inflation and create wealth. As the penetration of mutual funds increases, this will translate into a higher folio base at the industry level," Abhishek Tiwari, CBO, PGIM India Mutual Fund, said. Mutual fund folios of the industry stood at 18.6 crore in May-end, a surge of 4.6 per cent from 17.78 crore registered at the end of March. *—PTI*

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Bajrami scores fastest ever Euros goal after 23 seconds

The pressure was on Italy's new-look side under Luciano

DORTMUND, 16 JUNE

By conceding a goal after just 23 seconds, Italy made the worst possible start to its European Championship title defense.

Thankfully for the Azzurri, it soon got much better.

Italy recovered from letting in the quickest goal in the tournament's 64-year history to beat Albania 2-1 in Dortmund on Saturday in an atmospheric Adriatic derby that immediately threatened an upset.

Nedim Bajrami thrilled a heavily pro-Albanian crowd at Westfalenstadion by pouncing on a throw-in by Italy left-back Federico Dimarco that failed to reach teammate Alessandro Bastoni, before taking a touch and smashing a rising shot inside the near post.

Within 16 minutes, the Italians were ahead as Bastoni headed in Lorenzo Pellegrini's cross to the back post in the 11th then Nicolo Barella struck home a swerving first-time shot from the edge of the area. Barella was one of five survivors from the team that started for Italy in the penalty-shootout win over England in the 2021 European Championship final.

The pressure was on Italy's new-look side under Luciano Spalletti to win its opener given the other teams in Group B are three-time champion Spain and Croatia, a World Cup semifinalist in 2022. Spain beat Croatia 3-0 earlier on Saturday.

Albania's Nedim Bajrami put his side ahead after just 23 seconds in their opening Euro 2024 game against Italy
PHOTO: X / @EURO2024

Bajrami's goal gave the Azzurri a jolt and created some history — it was much quicker than the previous fastest in the tournament's lifespan, which was 67 seconds by Russia's Dmitri Kirichenko in 2004.

Yet they controlled the game after that, dominating possession to a backdrop of jeers and boos from a sea of Albanian red in the crowd.

"They showed there was a gulf in class by playing good football … we played the game the right way," Spalletti said.

"The scoreline doesn't reflect the difference between the two teams."

Late Weghorst strike guides the Dutch to a narrow win

Poland and the Netherlands kicked off Group D action in EURO 2024, with the Dutch winning 2-1. Liverpool striker Cody Gakpo and Weghorst turned the game around for the Dutch. Without Lewandowski, Poland couldn't secure any points and now look ahead to their next match against Austria, hoping for a win. Meanwhile, the Netherlands came from behind to win and are now preparing for their match against the favorites, France. With this win, the Netherlands leads Group D with three points, while Poland is at the bottom, awaiting the result of Austria vs France in the first round. *—AP*

Man shot by Hamburg police

DORTMUND, 16 JUNE

A man has been shot by police in a Hamburg area packed with football supporters ahead of Poland's Euro 2024 game with the Netherlands following an attack on an officer with an axe, according to the town's police force. The Reeperbahn district, which was populated by thousands of Dutch supporters at the time, was cleared by police shortly before 12:30 p.m. C.E.T. (6:30 a.m. E.T.) after an officer was attacked. Riot police entered the area and shot the man responsible for the attack. It is not yet clear whether the attacker was a football supporter. In a statement, Hamburg Police said, "At St Pauli, there is currently a major police operation. "According to initial findings, a person threatened police officers with a pickaxe and an incendiary device. The police then used their firearms. The attacker was injured and is currently receiving medical treatment."*—AP*

Ukraine face Romania in their UEFA Euro 2024 campaign opener on Monday
PHOTO: X / @EURO2024

Ukraine face Romania in campaign opener

DORTMUND, 16 JUNE

The Group E rivals Romania and Ukraine kick off their Euro 2024 campaigns on Monday in Munich. The first competitive meeting between the two nations sees a resurgent Romanian side, who arrive in Germany as qualifying group winners, face opponents who edged through via the playoffs.

Romania, taking part in their sixth European Championship and first since 2016, are determined to progress to the knockout phase this summer. Historically, the Tricolorii's win rate of just 6% at Euro finals suggests a tough task ahead, with their sole success in 16 games being a victory over England at Euro 2000.

However, the recent results have raised expectations. Romania capped off a superb qualifying campaign by beating Switzerland to top Group I unbeaten, with six wins and four draws from 10 fixtures, conceding just five goals. Recent friendlies have also showcased their defensive strength, aside from a 3-2 defeat to Colombia.

Ukraine, making their fourth consecutive appearance at UEFA's continental championship, has rarely fared well, losing eight of their 11 matches and failing to score in six of nine group games. Nonetheless, they reached the quarter-finals three years ago and aim to boost morale back home by repeating that success. *—AP*

PHOTO: PTI

Australia crush Scotland by 5 wickets

GROS ISLET, 16 JUNE

Australia did their arch-rivals England a massive favor with a five-wicket win over a gritty Scotland as the Richie-led side crashed out of the T20 World Cup Super Eight stage race here. With England hammering Namibia earlier in the day in a rain-truncated game, all that Buttler's side needed was Australia's win over Scotland to get a lifeline. Australia scored 186/5 while chasing 181 in 19.4 overs after Scotland fought right until the end to keep their hopes alive. After putting on a formidable total on board, Scotland had even reduced an edgy Australia to 60/3 at one stage but their most successful batters in this World Cup Travis (68) and Stoinis (59) delivered again. "We spoke about sticking to our plans.*—PTI*

Lovlina loses to Li Qian, clinches silver in Grand Prix

NEW DELHI, 16 JUNE

Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist boxer Lovlina Borgohain lost to China's Li Qian to settle for a silver medal in the women's 75kg contest at the Grand Prix Usti nad Labem in the Czech Republic.

The Paris Olympic-bound Borgohain lost by a 2-3 split verdict in her final bout against the reigning Asian Games champion late Saturday night.Qian, who is a two-time Olympic medallist and has three World Championships medals, including a gold under her belt, had defeated Borgohain in the summit clash of the Asian Games last year.

Lovlina said this will hold her in good stead going into the Paris Olympics."Participating in this competition has been a very good experience for me. I won a silver in this tournament before the Olympics was very important for me as far as my preparation was concerned.

This will be beneficial to him. I thank the Boxing Federation of India, TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme), and the Government of India," Lovlina said in a video, which was posted by Mansukh Mandaviya. Mandaviya lauded Lovlina for her performance."Congratulations to @LovlinaBorgohai for winning the Silver Medal at Grand Prix 2024.

She displayed great skills. Her success in the boxing ring is an inspiration for upcoming athletes. Best wishes for future endeavors," the sports minister tweeted.The tournament, being hosted under the aegis of World Boxing, featured four boxers in the women's 75kg category. *—PTI*

Lovlina Borgohain *PHOTO: X / @LOVLINA_BORGOHAIN*

T20 WORLD CUP

Bangladesh looks to seal Super Eight

KINGSTOWN, 16 JUNE

Bangladesh will look to iron out their flaws and seal the second Super Eight spot from Group D when they take on a tricky Nepal in the T20 World Cup here on Monday.

With four points, Bangladesh is all set to progress further in the tournament from the last group in the competition but a spirited Nepal will pose a strong threat.

Even though they have not yet won a game and are out of the race for the next round, Nepal's confidence will be sky-high after they nearly pulled off a win against South Africa and will be keen on fulfilling their dream of beating a Test-playing nation before signing off.

The equation for Bangladesh, however, could change if they lose to Nepal by a big margin and the Netherlands manages to do the same against a struggling Sri Lanka — an unlikely scenario indeed but this tournament has thrown its share of surprises.

The match starts at 5:00 AM IST

Bangladesh will take on a tricky Nepal in the T20 World Cup here on Monday
PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP

Sri Lanka looks to sign off on a high

Wary of the Dutch firepower and current form, the 2014 champions Sri Lanka, who are placed fifth in Group D, will take on the third-placed Netherlands.

Already out of reckoning for the Super Eight round, Sri Lanka's pride will be at stake given they have had a tournament to forget, marred with multiple issues on and off the field.

For the Scott Edwards-led Netherlands team, there will be a great deal of motivation to bring out their best and hope for a big win as well as luck to favor them.

Netherlands have notched wins in two out of three games in this tournament yet they find themselves nearly eliminated in a tight Group D, from which South Africa have already sailed through.

The match starts at 6:00 AM IST.

New Zealand eye consolatory win over PNG

A consolatory win over a lowly Papua New Guinea would be the best that New Zealand can walk away with in this T20 World Cup, with curtains coming down on their campaign prematurely.

For a team as consistent as New Zealand in ICC tournaments, the Kiwis have paid a heavy price for being sluggish at the start as a couple of defeats upfront led to their surprisingly early exit.

The game will, however, carry a massive significance for the Kiwi group as Trent Boult has confirmed this is his last T20 World Cup for the country and the Kane Williamson-led side will be motivated to give their best against PNG, who have lost each of their three matches so far.

The match starts at 8:00 PM IST *—PTI*

Indian players greet each other after winning the first ODI cricket match against South Africa, at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Smriti Mandhana celebrating her 100 in Bengaluru on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

Ton-up Smriti, spinners hand India massive 143-run win over SA in 1st ODI

BENGALURU, 16 JUNE

Smriti Mandhana's resolute hundred and a disciplined bowling effort, led by spinners Deepti Sharma and Asha Shobana, piloted India to a huge 143-run win over South Africa in the first women's ODI here on Sunday.

India now leads the three-match series 1-0, and the second game will be played here on June 19.Mandhana's sixth ODI century (117, 127 balls, 12x4s, 1x6) formed the fulcrum of India's competitive 265 for eight on a sluggish Chinnaswamy pitch.

Then the Indian bowlers worked their magic around the South African batters to bowl out the visitors for 122 as debutante leg-spinner Asha (4/21) led the show with a frugal spell and was well-supported by office Deepti (2/10).

Pacer Renuka Singh (1/30) gave India the perfect start, dismissing the in-form South Africa skipper Laura Wolvaardt in the first over itself.Wolvaardt had no answer for an excellent nip-backer from Renuka that clipped the top of her off-stump.

The Indians soon fetched the wickets of Tazmine Brits and Anneke Bosch as the tourists slumped to 33 for three.The experienced Marizane Kapp (24, 39 balls), who hammered Renuka for successive fours and six, tried to revive the innings with Sune Luus who fought well with a 33.

But their fourth wicket alliance of 39 runs consumed 68 balls as the asking rate climbed over seven which never really came down thereafter.Asha ended that struggle when the leg-spinner had Kapp caught at covers by Harmanpreet Kaur.

At five down for 74, South Africa was always facing the climb up the hill.Earlier, India's script for victory was written by Mandhana, who thrilled the home crowd with a well-paced hundred. Mandhana stitched two significant partnerships with the feisty Deepti (37, 48 balls, 3x4s) and Pooja Vastrakar (31 not out) to take India out of trouble after the hosts found themselves at 99 for five at one stage. India 265 for 8 (Mandhana 117, Khaka 3-47) beat South Africa 122 (Kapp 33, Asha 4-21) by 143 runs. *—PTI*

Ankita, Bhajan progress in Final Olympic Qualifier

ANTALYA, 16 JUNE

Indian archer Deepika Kumari suffered an embarrassing opening-round defeat to little-known Yaylagul Ramazanova of Azerbaijan, while Ankita Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur progressed to the pre-quarterfinals in the Final Olympic Qualifier, here on Sunday.

Ankita and Bhajan are thus one win away from sealing an individual women's quota. The individual quotas are allotted to the top eight nations. Each country gets one individual quota.

So far, India has a solitary quota -- in the men's section through Dhiraj Bommadevara from the Asian qualifying leg.

Ankita defeated Shelley Hilton 6-4 (24-26, 25-25, 28-20, 25-25, 27-25) and Mikaella Moshe 7-3 (28-25, 25-27, 27-27, 28-25, 26-25), both from Israel, to make the last-16.

Third-seeded Bhajan, who got a bye into the third round of 32, overcame Urantungalag Bishindee of Mongolia 6-2 (29-27, 28-26, 26-29, 27-24). *—PTI*

Bhajan Kaur and Ankita Bhakat *PHOTO: PTI*

NO. 1 BATTER WOULD COME GOOD

No concerns about Kohli's form: Rathour

LAUDERHILL, 16 JUNE

Virat Kohli's string of single-digit scores in the ongoing T20 World Cup is hardly a concern as he has been in superb touch during nets and is looking hungrier than ever ahead of the Super Eight, India's batting coach Vikram Rathour said.

Kohli, who was the highest run-scorer in the IPL, went through a dry run so far scoring 1, 4, and 0 against Ireland, Pakistan, and the USA respectively.

The moment the question popped up at the post-match media conference after the game against Canada got washed out on Saturday, Rathour was ready with the answer.

"I love it when every time I come there is a question about Virat Kohli, whether he is doing well or not. No concern at all, no concern at all," Rathour said.

"He (Kohli) has been batting superbly from the tournament that he came from (IPL). A couple of dismissals here, don't change anything, he is batting well."

Rathour is confident that India's No. 1 batter would come good when it matters the most.

"It's good that he is a little hungrier, he is keen to do well and switched on. It's a good space to be a batsman, I think.

"Looking forward to some good games and we've watched some good innings from him."

The batting coach sidestepped the query about whether playing four all-rounders, including Shivam Dube and Axar Patel, is cast in stone or not.

"Again, we need to be a flexible team. We need to look at the conditions that are in front of us and be ready to deal with those. So as a team, we are going to be flexible, I think.

"We'll react to what (conditions) we get on the day. We have enough sources in our team to deal with any kind of conditions," he said.

Some game time in Florida ahead of Super Eights would have surely helped, he said.

"But if the game had happened that would have helped us. We were looking forward to playing a game, to play a good game of cricket. There's always a concern when you play a game in conditions like this that some injury can happen. *—PTI*

Vikram Rathour and Virat Kohli

PHOTO: PTI

- Virat Kohli's string of single-digit scores in the ongoing T20 World Cup is hardly a concern as he has been in superb touch during nets and is looking hungrier than ever ahead of the Super Eight, India's batting coach Vikram Rathour said.